



messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 37 – Number 8

December 2019

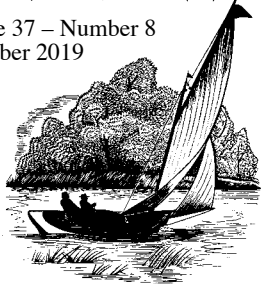
Bark Canoes & Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia
Archipelago – Tommy Ohlsen's Western Passage
The Lonely Roads of Late September
The Building of Wooden Lifeboats
The Construction of the Beach Ball – An Old Fisherman and His Boat
...and Much More



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

For the past few issues I've been including a couple of pages of news from our US Coast Guard (see page 52 in this issue). A regular Coast Guard online newsletter started turning up here unbidden and as I got into it I found it to be quite interesting. It brings an assortment of news about our Coast Guard at work, not just search and rescue efforts but also news of interdicting immigrants seeking illegal entry to our shores, of catching drug runners in fancy fast semi submarine craft, of shutting down unlicensed tour boat operators, lots different aspects to their work.

Of most interest to me, and I thought perhaps to you, was their search and rescue stories. A lot of different ways exist, it seems, for one to get into trouble afloat, resulting in turning to others (most often the Coast Guard) for help. Sometimes these are real unanticipated emergencies, but too often they are the result of plain stupidity, lack of skills or knowledge about how the ocean works.

What is really impressive is the array of equipment the Coast Guard has at the ready to come to the rescue of the unfortunates. They have a whole fleet of small stuff called Response Boats in graduated sizes to meet conditions. They have several different models of helicopters as well as multi engine fixed wing aircraft ready to fly to the rescue. Their aircrews even get to do rescues inshore it seems in inaccessible terrain close to the coast.

Sometime the whole array goes to work, response boats rushing to sea, helicopters sweeping large areas looking for signs of the missing, the bigger fixed wing craft hovering near a craft in trouble to guide the surface craft to the action. Contemplating all this I considered what this all must cost, even a simple inshore rescue of a swamped outboard or capsized day sailer. Really big money. Who pays the bill?

I assume it is paid by that portion of our federal taxes that finds its way into the Coast Guard budget. We do this ashore in our communities with fire and rescue and police paid for by our local taxes, but even with the rather exotic array of equipment these land based services now have acquired to assist them, their rescue work doesn't come close to what it costs to rescue someone in trouble on the ocean.

Yes, obviously we should rescue those in need, and the Coast Guard stands ready

to do so. They have established a communications network to alert private individuals who may happen to be nearby the incident to assist as "Good Samaritans," often at some financial cost to themselves as well at times with some personal risk. We do not later read in reports of these incidents of those rescued contributing to the costs of their rescues. Perhaps they do, I'd like to hear so if so.

One particularly egregious example of a costly rescue effort took place a few years ago when a competitor in one of those round the world solo sailing races was in big trouble in the Southern Ocean hundreds of miles east of New Zealand. After being rescued at great cost and risk by New Zealand rescue services (including volunteers) the rescued skipper later wrote a book, which sold successfully. It was later reported in the boating press that none of the money he earned was passed on to those who rescued him. There was no legal requirement that he do so, but one would think that he might have spared a bit to those to whom he probably owed his life. It would undoubtedly have been invested in bettering their rescue service's ability to rescue the next guy.

About That November Issue!

I was as surprised as you must have been when our November issue arrived early last month, only to be hidden within the covers of the October issue. Once past the initial confusion this created, the rest of the November issue was revealed. How did this happen? Somehow the printing process did not follow the proof I had approved.

Last summer our August issue arrived with the cover photo from the July issue featured, but the cover date and featured contents text were correct, as were the entire inside front cover and inside and outside back covers. Not so this time, all four cover pages were lifted from the October issue.

So I'm running the original intended cover photo from the November issue on this December issue (even though the story it related to was in that November issue) because I like it, it was a thrilling moment for me that day. I am also running my Commentary from the November issue as it is still germane to our content this month.

On the Cover...

Here's a closeup view of Mystic Seaport's Schooner *Brilliant* as she swept past our little Essex Shipbuilding Museum's Chebacco pinky schooner *Lewis B. Story* in the parade of sail at the annual Gloucester (Massachusetts) end of summer Waterfront Festival, the highlight of which is the schooner races, a lingering vestige of the glory days when Nova Scotia sent its famed *Bluenose* schooners to Gloucester to take on the local schoomermen. That swoopy looking boom seemed to be coming close aboard us as *Brilliant* overtook us, but it missed. I was along for the ride in the *Story*.

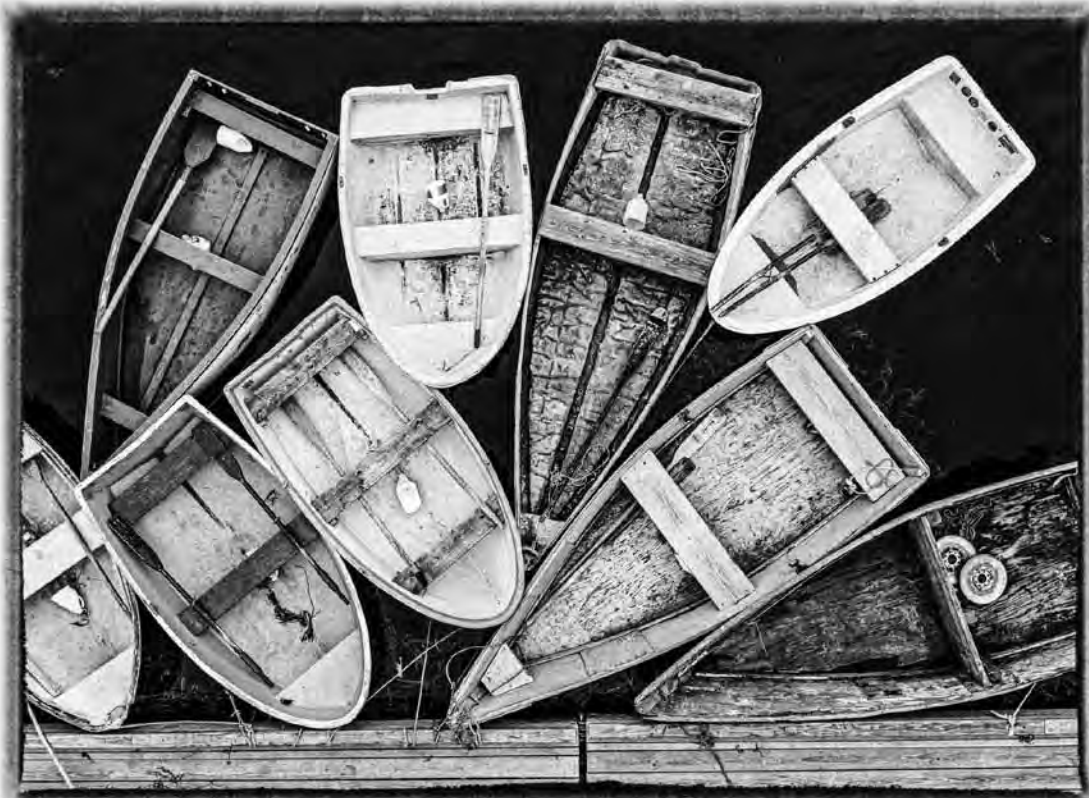


Harkening Back With Harvey

"Small craft images from today as viewed through a long ago lens."

Images by Harvey Petersiel

Come on down. . ."



© Harvey Petersiel

The Indigenous Watercraft of Northern Eurasia

By W. W. Fitzhugh, H. T. Luukkanen
(Extracts from *Bark and Skin Boats of the Eurasian North*)

Here we overview the indigenous watercraft from northern Europe to Bering Strait and the Far East. Our purpose has been to document the types of boats, their history, and how they were made and used by the cultures of this vast region.

In 1964, the Smithsonian Institution published *Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America* authored by Edwin Tappan Adney and Howard I. Chapelle. By that time, the Smithsonian had been collecting Native American artifacts and watercraft for more than a century. Yet, except for a report by Otis Mason and Meriden Hill and a description of building a Chippewa birchbark canoe by Robert Ritzenthaler, anthropological literature on indigenous North American watercraft was largely anecdotal.

For the first time, Adney and Chapelle had provided scholars and general readers with a comprehensive study of canoes and kayaks in North American collections that included detailed descriptions, ethnographic data, photographs and drawings, and information on use, decoration, and ritual. Despite its monographic style, the book became so popular that it remained in print ever since.

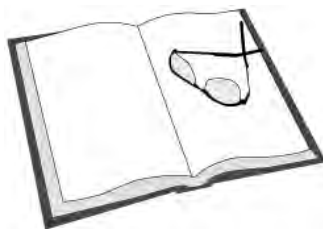
The opportunity to prepare a comparable work prompted the present authors to undertake a sequel for the Eurasian continent. *Bark and Skin Boats of the Eurasian North* describes the history, use, and types of bark and skin boats utilized by the traditional cultures of northern Eurasia. The book serves as an historical atlas of traditional boats among more than forty tribes and peoples from northern Europe to Central Asia and the Far East.

Tappan Adney Legacy

Tappan Adney was a renaissance individual; artist, naturalist, woodsman, linguist, and scholar. At age 19, while Adney was vacationing in Woodstock, New Brunswick, a Maliseet Indian named Peter Joe taught him how to make a bark canoe. Soon Adney became fascinated with American Indians, Indian lore, and, in particular, their canoes and canoe traditions. His early curiosity about Indian watercraft developed into a lifetime spent documenting canoes and kayaks in museums and Native communities across North America. He documented manufacturing techniques, raw materials, and vessel performance; he interviewed and photographed Native Americans making canoes and used this information to build scale models and make nautical-style drawings of canoe lines, and sketches of construction details.



Yakut Canoe Model. Adney made this model based on Otis Mason's 1901 publication of a model Yakut canoe (MAE 701-51) collected by Alexander Fedorovich von Middeldorf in the Lena River valley in 1846. The MAE model was loaned to the Smithsonian to facilitate Mason's comparative study of North American canoes. (Mariner's Museum photo MP48)

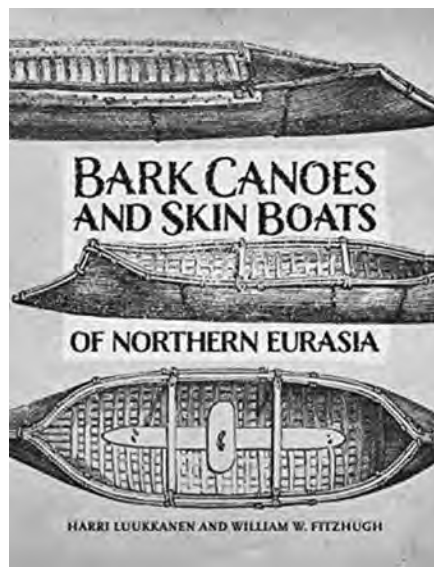


Book Review

Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia

By Harri Luukkanen & William W. Fitzhugh

This book describes the design, construction and uses of skin and bark boats for 35 traditional cultures ranging from northern Scandinavia to the Russian Far East, from the Bering Strait to northern China and from South Siberia to the Arctic Ocean. The Eurasian peoples, responding to their geography, climate and environment, learned to construct and perfect small watercraft made from dugout logs or the bark of birch, aspen, larch and other trees, each variety crafted for its special use and environment. This definitive volume is richly illustrated with historical photographs and drawings, first person explorer accounts from the 16th-19th centuries and information on traditional bark and skin preparation, wood bending and other construction techniques. The book serves as the companion to *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*.



Late in life, he sold his models and willed his voluminous archives to the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia. Following Adney's death in 1950, Howard Chapelle, a marine architect and curator of naval history at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, organized Adney's materials into a monographic study. Its ethnographic descriptions and photographs provided a window onto a long-neglected and mostly vanished part of North American Native life, and its construction drawings enabled recreational boat builders to make authentic replicas for the first time.

While the history of European plank boats has been discussed by many authors, there has been relatively little synoptic literature on traditional watercraft covering the entire region of northern Eurasia. Rudolf Trebitsch wrote on the origin and distribution skin boats in Europe; H.H. Brindley reported on boats of Siberia based on reports of early explorers and navigators; and Scandinavian skin boats have been discussed by Westerdahl. There is also an early global summary of skin and bark boats and on bark boats of East Africa.

Three years before Adney's and Chapelle's book appeared, Valentina V. Antropova, a researcher in the Ethnography Department of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, also known as the Kunstkamera in St. Petersburg, published a planked titled "Boats" in the Kunstkamera's 1961 *Historical-Ethnographical Atlas of Siberia*. Antropova's paper described northern Russia's indigenous bark canoes, dugouts, planked boats, kayaks, and large skin boats for each major ethnographic group and offered a typological classification of the different boat types. Antropova recognized that because Siberia lacked Europe's Roman literature, her primary sources would be ethnographic and historical.

North Eurasian Boat Types

In her "frame boat" class, Antropova identified three birch-bark canoe types, which she named after the river systems where they had been found. The Yenisey type has a pointed, overhanging bow and stern. The Lena type has a rounded, upturned bow and stern projection, a partially enclosed cockpit, and gunwales that do not extend the full length of the boat. The Amur type has bow and stern projections, a narrow beam, and sometimes partially covered bow and stern decks. Birch bark was the preferred material for all three types.

Antropova's skin boat classification has two types. The large, open skin boat is defined by a keel running down the middle of the vessel's bottom to which ribs that curve upward to the gunwales are attached. Although adding weight, the keel adds longitudinal strength needed for use in rough maritime regions. This large, open-top, skin-covered bidara was used by Chukchi and Pacific coastal groups in northeastern Siberia for long-distance travel, trade, and hunting whales and walrus. It was called angypik by the Chukchi and Yupik Eskimo, umiak by the Alaskan and Canadian Inuit, and angyaq by Kodiak Alutit.

The second type is the smaller, fully-decked, skin-covered kayak used on both sides of Bering Strait and throughout Arctic North America as a hunting craft propelled by single, double, or occasionally in the Aleutian Islands, by three paddlers, said to have been an innovation to accommodate a Russian trade boss.

Although Antropova was primarily concerned with the description and geographic distribution by ethnic group, like Trebitsch, she also had ideas about boat history. She commented on the widespread distribution of the bark canoe, which was replaced in Western Siberia and the Okhotsk region first by expanded log boats and later, following Russian contact with Native groups in the 17th to 19th centuries, by plank boats. Based on linguistic data, she speculated that the birchbark canoe probably originated in the taiga forest zone of southern Siberia.

She also commented on the northeastern Siberian distribution and probable origin of skin-covered baidarkas and kayaks, which she identified as the most specialized and ancient of all known Russian indigenous boats, among interior reindeer hunters. Citing Rudenko and Arutiunov's and Sergeev's finds at Ekven, she noted that models of boats similar to ethnographic skin-covered umiaks and kayaks were recovered from Old Bering Sea and Punuk archaeological sites in coastal Chukotka dating ca. 1,500-800 and 1,200 years ago, respectively. She also remarked that 16th-century exploration literature contains illustrations of kayak-like boats used by Nenets maritime hunters and their neighbors in the Barents and Kara Seas.

The classification system used in our survey largely follows Antropova's taxonomy but recognizes five rather than three bark canoe types. We follow Antropova's Yenisey and Lena types, split her Amur type into two sub-types (Amur I and II), and identify a new Ob-Pechora type. In addition, our study of keeled skin boats recognizes more variation in the open and closed types than Antropova's. We classify the kayak group into several ethnic-based sub-types, including Yukagir, Eskimo-Chukchi, Koryak, and Kuril/ Ainu. Our open skin boat classification follows Antropova's two types: the Eskimo-Chukchi type of Chukotka and the Koryak-Kerek type of northern Kamchatka.

Description of Canoe Types

Bark canoes were used by all aboriginal peoples living in Northern Eurasia's boreal forest. The era of birch-bark canoe lasted until the 18th century in most of Eurasia and a century or two longer in parts of eastern Siberia and the Far East. Canoe type areas usually follow the large river basins of the Pechora-Ob, Yenisey, Lena, and Amur River homelands of the people who used these boats. Each river drainage area had its own typical canoe design, and these types often were shared across linguistic and ethnic borders. The close linguistic and cultural relations among the various groups living along a single river system facilitated sharing, and their canoe traditions tended to cluster in a similar fashion.

The Yenisey type has strong double gunwales that sandwich both the horizontal lath planking strips and the vertical ribs, a technique still used in modern wood canoe construction today. The Lena type with more or less vertical bow and stern profiles was used by Evenk and Sakha peoples living around the eastern portions of the Vitim and Olekma rivers, eastern tributaries of the Lena. In addition to this type, people living in the Lena basin also used canoe types known from the Yenisey and Amur systems due to population migrations and adoption of neighboring canoe technology.

Amur canoes occur in two main forms. Amur I has long projecting bow and stern extensions resembling "beaks" that turn upward at their ends, while Amur II is a short canoe with straight, pointed extensions at the waterline. The longer Amur I type typically had a beam of 70 centimeters, a strong bottom construction using as many as five bark layers glued together, and an interior keel running from end to end. Wooden blocks were sewn into the bark sheets to support the gunwales at the bow and stern. Because its hull design resisted flexing, the Amur I type could be made very long, as demonstrated by a 15-meter-long bark canoe found on the Maya River, a tributary of the Aldan.

The Amur II-type canoe, originally described by Otis Mason as a "sturgeon-nose" canoe because its ends or "beaks" resembled a sturgeon's snout, was short, had rather weak gunwales, and could carry only a single person. Beyond the Amur, the Amur II type was known in the upper (southern) Lena River locations where Evenk people of Amur origin resided. Most Amur basin people were Tungus-related, and all made similar bark canoes.

Our proposed Ob-Pechora type bark canoe originated in Southern Siberia, where it was used by Samoyed and shared with Ob-Ugrian peoples; from there, it diffused throughout Western Siberia between the Pechora and the Yenisey Rivers. Evidence for this canoe type comes from several sources: Kamas canoe construction on the Yenisey River documented in G. F. Miller's 1730-40 *Description of Siberian Peoples*; a drawing of a Mansi or Khanty boat in Obdorsk made by Tobias Königsfeld in 1728; a Khanty model in the Swedish Ethnographic Museum collected by F.R. Martin on the Tobol River in 1895; a bark canoe model from the Amgun River (MAE 5333); and Samoyed oral evidence from Narym.

The Ob-Pechora type occurred in the middle Ob-Irtysh-Tobol area occupied mainly by the Samoyed (Nenets, Selkup, and Kamas-Koibal) and Ob-Ugrian (Khanty and Mansi) peoples. This canoe type was found among Turkic Tatars in the south Siberian taiga and was shared with western Ural peoples in the Mezen-Pechora taiga of northeastern Europe. Its main differences from the Yenisey type are: (1) presence of an oval rim instead of transverse thwart, known among the Eastern Khanty; (2) a single rather than a double gunwale strake; (3) passing the bark over, rather than between, the gunwales; and (4) a different method for fastening the gunwales.

The latter involved lashing the gunwales together fifty centimeters from their ends, thus creating a narrow top profile for bow and stern. In the Ob canoe, the gunwale ends were not pinched together but were fastened to separate pieces of bent wood. The rounded ends provided more cargo space and buoyancy and reduced taking on wave water. On the middle Ob, Khanty canoe builders doubled the birchbark bottom by inserting an additional bark layer inside the outer shell. In other features, the Yenisey and Ob-Pechora canoes were similar.

Despite the great distances and multiple ethnic groups occupying the region from the Yenisey to the Pechora, the similarities between the canoes of this region probably results from two factors: migration history of the past 1,000 years, and the intense interac-

tions of long-distance traders during the Russian fur trade era. The Khanty, Nenets, and Mansi were constantly trading and warring with one another across the Ural passes. Until circa 1470, many Mansi lived on the European side and held lands reaching as far west as the Dvina River, where their traders were in contact with Karelian groups. This could account for the similarity in canoe styles between the Ob and the Mezen-Pechora taiga.

Archaeological, linguistic, and DNA data suggest that the eastern Saami peoples who once lived along the southern White Sea coast had contacts with groups living in the Cis Urals. It is likely that the Saami birchbark canoe types as they are known today from oral descriptions and remains found in northern Sweden, were also similar to Mansi or Samoyed canoes known from the White Sea.

Here, as in other areas of Eurasia, Antropova's and our studies indicate that geographic proximity along a single river system generally was a more important factor than either language or ethnicity in determining the geography of boat types. This principle confounds the typological changes usually seen across cultural-historic and ethnolinguistic borders. In his study of northeastern European paddle types, Grigori Burov found that he could date different types of paddles to a certain millennium, beginning as early as 8700bp. In this case, chronology rather than culture seems to have been the dominant factor determining a paddle form.

By contrast, from the 19th century ethnographic data, Otis Mason found that the shapes of paddles from different Amur cultures were good indicators for the ethnic groups who made them. Similarly, style shifts in Eskimo kayak and paddle types from Alaska to Greenland show strong correlation with ethnic and language areas.

Recent research at the 8500bce Mesolithic site at Star Carr by Peter Rowley-Conwy reviewed the scant information on bark canoes in North European prehistory. Noting finds of birch resin and bark sheets in water-logged Mesolithic sites, Rowley-Conwy believes birchbark canoes were the usual vehicles for exploiting post-glacial wetland environments. Undoubtedly, the same could be said for post-glacial northern Eurasia, where 8700-year-old paddles indicate water transport.

(Editor Comments: *Bark and Skin Boats of the Eurasian North* contains numerous references befitting its scholarly purpose. We have not included them in this extract intended to be for general small craft interested readers.)



MAJOR BIRCH BARK CANOES IN NORTHERN EURASIA

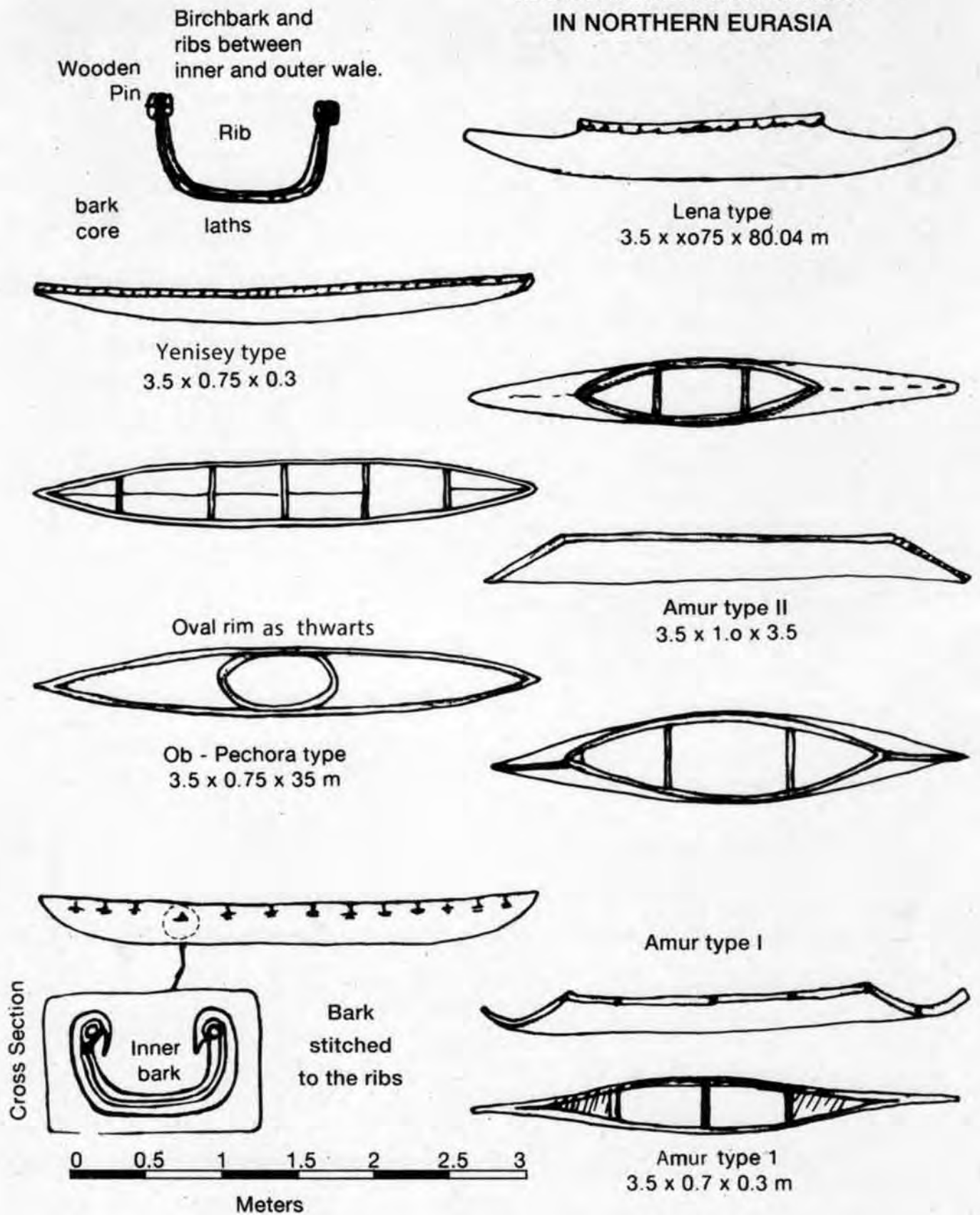


Figure 2. Canoe types of the Russian North and Far East (drawing by Harri Luukkanen and Marcia Bakry)

Sailing Alone

By Michael R. Wing

The bow is time's arrow so regrets bubble up beside the rudder
times he quit when he should have stayed
what he's become and what she's turned into
Half his lifespan - more - and his regrets are ordinary, boring even
When he sees water chattering down a mountain stream he resents its
carelessness

wants it to back up and try again
He craves a boat that cuts the water in laminar flow
it merges behind and nothing is out of place
a boat that leaves no wake
Instead of turbulence, missed chances, doubt
But he has a boat and his boat is the Universe
The water is ether with salt that tastes like the mud he comes from
salt patiently leached from millions of years of crystalline rock
that flavored the ancient oceans no longer on maps
oceans of everything
waters of Precambrian genesis, plasma, comets and rain

His keel senses gravity's ballast
heels over just so on a port tack but no more
it takes a whole planet to do that
a planet's worth of gravity against a five knot breeze
so maybe gravity is the weakest thing there is
less than a whisper, fainter than a puff
smaller than dust, a suggestion usually too quiet to hear

A star's fire powers the engine; the awful frenzied percussion of atoms
unspeakable pressure, infinite incandescence
purifying chaos of collision and fusion and transformation
annihilation and rebirth in less than no time
multiplied by the trillions of the trillions
but he does not use the engine today; he rarely has to

And the hull serves as the planet he lives on, with a cabin that contains
food, water, and a place to rest
a domed cave roof to deflect the drops which spray like tiny meteors
a ham and cheese sandwich, an apple and a thermos of something hot
he is starting to think about lunch already
he can lie down below on the V-berth when he isn't at the tiller
you need a planet, but it doesn't have to be a big one
the flag says who he is

his boat even has a name painted on it, like a planet does
He is certain his two sails are the reborn spirits of wild birds that he
hunted when he was wild
the tundra was sodden and a sky dark gray with loneliness
the snow geese and white-fronted geese from Asia rested on the plains
all the way to the sea, a black line far away
the noisy wind exhilarating
they let us catch them; knew our need
no fewer geese in the sky afterwards
feathers luffed and whirled away as we plucked them
the fat nourished, blood steamed
it kept us alive, a boat should have sails

The rudder and tiller can represent the illusion of autonomy so
enough about that; he decides to think about something else instead
Because the mast is the axis of the world tree - Yggdrasil the Ash
- and the anchor its three roots (there is one Danforth anchor, with
three pointy ends)
the tree that connects all the worlds
with a spring and a rainbow, frost, an eagle and a drill-toothed squirrel
who delivers messages
and don't visible lines connect everything like phloem and xylem in
a tree? Sheets, shrouds, forestay, halyards, topping lift, downhaul,
outhaul, leech lines, boom vang, anchor rode, dock lines, reef points,
painter

On board he doesn't need anything else because his boat is the Universe

five miles away he sees Hog Island
two hundred and forty thousand miles away he can see the Moon
after that it's harder to think about but
two point five million light years away (after dark) he can make out
Andromeda
binocular eyes
at least can wink at the destroying action of time



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"Not in my wildest dreams could I imagine this when I started the boat"
-Bob

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Whoever named the era the Golden Years can kiss my transom. My dad always said that they were called the Golden Years because it took a lot of gold to survive them. I think he said that coming from the dentist.

OK, so I am a whiner and complainer, it is part of being an old fart, a "dated" person, over the hill, a senior citizen, etc. You get the picture. I don't particularly like being next in line at Martin Brothers Funeral Home.

This year has been a beast, the type I don't ever want to experience again. On the other hand, at my age I probably won't experience this again. The year started with our annual vacation in Florida, however, instead of our usual February sojourn as we have done for the last five years, we had to go in January because our unit's owner wanted to be there in February. Darn her. I'd be more frustrated but she is a gorgeous, tall, long legged German who looks wonderful in a bikini. Yeah, I know that I am a sexist pig. At my age I can get away with it.

Unfortunately there was a death in the family just as we settled into the southern warmth so we had to rush back to Iowa to deal with the funeral. Of course, the funeral was on the coldest day on record in Iowa, 30°F below with a 25mph breeze. Few could attend because their cars wouldn't start and we told her friends to stay at home. Martin Brothers Funeral Home had enough business. I could just see a batch of 85 to 90-year-olds trying to attend a funeral in that weather.

Brother Mikey said that since he had to take care of the funeral arrangements, I could be the executor of the estate and promptly left for the Bahamas. Did I mention how much I love my brother?

Subsequently winter faded and I started to think about my poor old West Wight Potter 15 sitting looking pained in the snow. I had elevated the trailer to protect the tires, but when I lowered her both tires were flat as pancakes. I pulled off the spare only to discover that it too had a lovely split about 6" long. Five Seasons Tire Company lovingly replaced all three for a fee.

The boat was home from her spot at the lake because I wanted to paint her underside and had ordered the appropriate stuff from some marine store for a small fee. Brilliantly, I purchased a power washer, desiring to peel off some of the bottom coloration, but instead of the underside sloughing off, my white deck and cockpit shed like my cat in spring. I then had to order a couple of quarts of topside goop for a small fee.

For about four weeks I scraped, sanded, stripped, scratched and generally attempted to find the gel coat under layers of barn paint, whitewash, glossy oil based and unglossy water based gunk. Just as I was about to scream bloody murder and announce to all the earth that I hated boats, I suddenly started feeling less than wonderful.

Within an hour I was running a temperature of 103° and chilled to the point of requiring four quilts and a tongue depressor between my teeth to keep them from chattering. The next day my family doctor sent me to the emergency room where their thermometer said 98.6°. They sent me home. I purchased a new thermometer on the way. The new one said, like the old one, 103°.

The following Monday my doctor placed me in St Luke's Hospital and Center for Old Worthless People. I had a bladder infection that had spread to other parts of my anatomy that swelled to many times normal size. The pain was excruciating.

Golden Years?

By Stephen D. (Doc) Regan

After a sojourn of five days in the Center for Disease Acquisition, I was given parole and went home all beaten like I had survived a hurricane in a rowboat, twice. I now needed a morning nap, an afternoon nap and a post dinner nap. Meanwhile, my scraped and sanded boat sat forlornly in the driveway looking like it needed to go to the knackers.

Within five to six weeks I could venture outside. Refusing to work any harder than necessary, I towed the boat to a body shop, handed over all my expensive marine paint and told them to finish the job. They did. They did rather well at that for a fee.

Of course, I had stripped off all the accoutrements such as pad eyes, rigging, eye straps, blocks and cleats. Being incredibly intelligent, if I do say so myself, I placed all nuts and bolts in a plastic bag and all the hardware in another. These were placed in my workshop in the basement.

When the boat returned home and was ready to be reassembled, I discovered that hobgoblins had hidden my hardware. Worse, those demented creatures tossed my nuts and bolts all over the place. Trying to put things back in order I found that nothing fit, pieces were missing, none of the nuts fit the bolts and I had no idea where things were supposed to go on a boat that I have owned for ten years.

After multiple trips (and I mean multiple trips) to the friendly Ace Hardware store, I finally had almost everything back where it was supposed to be. Finally *Genny Sea* was hauled back to the lake. The mast was raised. The mast was lowered because some dolt forgot to put on the mainsheets. The mast was raised. The mast was lowered because some idiot forgot to attach the backstay. The hobgoblins had also scurried away with the mainsail halyards and some other lines. Oh well, it was September before I actually hit the water.

As I pulled into the DNR sailboat area, a stern looking officer noted that I had no registration numbers on the side of the boat. During the paint job the lettering was removed and I totally forgot to get new ones. Worse, my trailer license plate did not have a current sticker and my trailer's directional lights did not work. The registration/ownership certificate was nowhere in my knowledge bank.

They suggested I get my act together, or maybe I was beyond having an act! The smart alecks. Most of them graduated from Upper Iowa University where I was Academic Dean. I am fairly certain they hit on me intentionally. Maybe I didn't put them on the Dean's List or something.

Finally, I was actually able to get on the water and sail for approximately one single, measly hour. The 60 brief minutes did bring back some sanity and my extraordinary short temper was ameliorated, slightly. My wife, the cat and the dog remain alive, however, the neighbors are all packing weapons this summer.

If one good cruise is so incredible, then another would be even better. So I headed out to sea (OK, a manmade lake surrounded by corn fields). Being exceptionally anxious to get going I did not do any semblance of pre-sail checking of anything nor grab my cell phone and this proved to be my undoing.

After a full hour of whitecaps and speed sailing wing on wing downwind and steady beating back upstream, a sudden bang and the sight of my mast slowly falling to the port side startled me. Now this has occurred before because my mast has a slight bend in it and the base of it is lopsided from a towing accident (can't you just see Mississippi Bob shaking his head and muttering, "No one is THAT stupid").

So I hauled in my sails, my mast, my boom and all my lines that ultimately ended up in a huge pile of knots in the cockpit. No problem, I simply needed to start my motor and head back to the ramp where I could fix things and head back out. Unfortunately my Mariner 5 is a contemptible bitch. She starts with a single pull every time I do not need to start her. She never, ever runs when I need her. I needed her so the wench failed to consider even turning over or sounding like it wanted to commence operation. I pulled the cord until I was out of breath and my blood pressure was very high in the triple digits.

Not a problem, thinks I. I hailed a multitude of fishermen who enthusiastically waved back and returned to focus on fishing. A plethora of pleasure boats went by also vigorously waving back at me as I slowly drifted downwind toward a small rocky outcropping. Finally, hung up on the rocks and mud about 6' off shore, I worked on lifting the centerboard until I came close to my first coronary before the mud yielded (Mississippi Bob is shaking his head again, isn't he).

So I sat and debated whether I would jump overboard and stumble through mud and algae about 4' deep in order to reach land, walk around in the woods until I found a path to civilization and call my wife that I would not be fixing supper that night. And I sat. And I sat.

After an hour of contemplating my navel seeking answers to great philosophical questions, a kayaker happened to paddle within calling distance. She DID have a cell phone and it actually was with her. She called my wife to tell her my predicament. Not a good idea. Not a good idea at all.

Wife, knowing she could not help me and couldn't think of anything else to do, called 911. The problem was that I was not in Linn County but in Johnson County. Another 911 call. Patient and kindly, the switchboard person called DNR, Linn County, Johnson County, DNR and the kind kayaker all returned phone calls to wife who was now heavily into the wine collection. DNR sent out a person to see if I was still alive and worthy of assistance.

Naturally, the DNR person was indeed a graduate of Upper Iowa University. He merely closed his eyes and tried not to shake his head at the old Dean's problem. He went to get a boat and eventually towed me back to the landing. He nicely ensured I got my boat on the trailer and still was breathing. Mr Nick Rocco even came back to check up on me the next day. Hey, we train our conservation management students well!

Now, in the autumn of this year I can state that I sailed twice this past summer, golfed once, wrote nothing of importance, researched darn little but I did paint a door. This weekend will consist of going back to Ace Hardware for rope, lettering, nuts and bolts, sponges, cleaning soap, a can of starting fluid and maybe they can find my marbles. I certainly lost them somewhere this year.

And I have to cook supper for a long, long time.

2019 Mayo Beach Rowing Rendezvous

By Stephen Salley
Photos by Don Stuckey

Continuing the tradition of providing perfect boating weather, the Seventh Annual Mayo Beach Rowing Rendezvous in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod took place September 21, with rowers arriving in the early afternoon. The tide had turned at 11:30am so the boats were gently lifted all afternoon and carried up against the sandy shore by the light southwest wind.

The Rendezvous is sponsored by The Old Wharf Dory Company, South Shore Boat Works and S.N. Smith and Son. The Cape Cod TSCA helps out with publicity and the Wellfleet Harbor Master, Michael Flanagan, waives the ramp fee for participants. He and his assistants are always alert to help in launching and retrieving as the ramp is a bit steep and can be slippery at low tide.

By mid afternoon the crescent beach was crowded with small rowing craft, their owners, crews and interested visitors. The policy is that anyone can try out any boat they choose with owners providing life jackets and everyone helping to push off and land. A skiff with outboard power stands by as a chase boat. The calm, sunny and warm weather encouraged a variety of visitors of all ages to try rowing, in some cases for the first time.

The big attraction was the four oared gig recently acquired by the Cape Cod TSCA chapter. This attractive vessel in great condition came from the Floating the Apple folks in New York City. All afternoon volunteer crews lined up to take it out.

Everyone agreed that the Rendezvous was a great success. Wellfleet harbor is a busy place on a fine late summer afternoon. Visitors and residents alike all participated in an activity not based on internal combustion.

Credit and thanks for this well organized event goes to Walter Baron, proprietor of the Old Wharf Dory Company, and Mrs Baron. They make all the arrangements with the town, provide the refreshments and especially the fine weather.

Mayo Beach with the town pier in the background.



The view to the west toward what was once the lightkeeper's house.



Captain Mike Orby's Banks dory ready for fishing.

Bill Stirling of the Cape Cod TSCA holds the bow of the gig.



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I don't often claim to have designed my pocket ship, the *Rongo*, because it seems disingenuous to say. She had predecessors that worked as rescue boats, prams and dinghies centuries before she was conceived. Joshua Slocum had a centerfold of similar design on board his sloop *Spray* in 1864. I may have calculated the length, beam and draft but I copied the overall concept from other boats I saw and the mathematics behind those date back to the Phoenicians, I'm merely the beneficiary of their vision.

Besides this dinghy of mine is not merely a feat of engineering, she is an amalgam of music and sculpture passed down from antiquity. Artists and scientists have always played off of each other's dreams. I can hardly understand why art and science are considered separate subjects. The Wright brothers are credited with inventing the airplane but Leonardo DaVinci had sketches of machines with flapping wings in his sketchbooks. It is a plausible assumption that his inspiration for such a device came from the myth of Icarus, son of Deadalus.

The Savannah River is lazy with strange tides. I put in at Houlihan's Marina, Port Wentworth, Georgia. As I rowed away I faced a parking lot and a single story structure, white with faint blue shutters. The water was 88°, chromium oxide green and very muddy. Less than 200 yards from the ramp my port side oarlock ripped out of the teak it was screwed into. I dropped anchor and rebuilt it across from an overgrown rice paddy that was once known as Mulberry Plantation.

There were boats engaged in a study under the guidance of Georgia State University nearby. They were throwing nets in an effort to catch sturgeon. Large catfish and spotted tail bass jumped over the nets. They hovered around me while I redesigned my oarlock.

Southwesterly winds hissed through the blades of spartina and rice. I finished with the oarlock and rounded Hog Marsh Island. The Savannah National Wildlife Refuge could be seen in the distance, guarded by cypress trees.

Soon I was rowing past the International Paper factory where bundles of trees were being dropped down a chute by a giant robot hand. I was trying to stay in the middle of the river but there was an unexpected current drawing me toward two silos labeled "Dixie Crystals, Since 1917." I rowed toward South Carolina. As I rowed away I noticed two water cooled furnaces, where they refine Guatemalan and Philippine cane sugar. Monolithic smoke stacks exhaled white smoke into the air and blew it towards Garden City.

Savannah shares the 33nd parallel with San Diego, Jerusalem and Nanking. It was over 90° out and my water supply was dangerously low already. I decided to test out my Life Straw water filtration unit. I saw a beach occupied only by a flock of turkey vultures and parked my vessel. Unbeknownst to me a sewage treatment plant was on the other side of the tree line. Two turkey vultures left their perch and flew upstream as I landed. The beach was rich with quartzite. Through its patina of algae it appeared to be jade.

As I crouched in the muddy water with my blue plastic straw, drinking from the Savannah River, I saw a stick with eyes floating down stream towards me. She was in league with the vultures most likely. I grabbed a handful of quartz and jumped into the boat as the alligator stealthily swam



“Archipelago”

By Andre Bertolino

toward me. I picked up my daggerboard and showed it to her. Her reptile mind saw only a giant tooth. She turned around and disappeared. I rowed back towards Georgia, just in case, operating the tiller with my foot.

Five miles northwest of Savannah, as far back as 1,100 CE, there was a complex of several mounds on the river, between two creeks. The ceremonies that were practiced there were the same ceremonies practiced throughout the Native American Mississippian culture. They grew maize, squash and corn. They made pottery and traded with towns from a great distance. These mounds, commonly called the “Irene Mounds,” were for the chief and his immediate family so approximately 40 people resided there. The settlement was a gathering place for all of the neighboring Indians, including those just passing through.

In 1937 the Irene Mounds were excavated by archaeologists and 47 African American Women. The project was part of FDR's “New Deal” program. The fact that educated black women were hired broke several taboos. Black women were excluded from the majority of the New Deal's programs in the south. One of the discoveries was that the Irene Inhabitants were creating a form of pottery in the Swift Creek tradition. This style of pottery is made with engraved paddles that are pressed into the work before firing. The designs were often complex curvilinear patterns. Some of them contained the architectural designs of the pyramids in Guatemala.

As I came around the bight, I could see the exact spot where this ceremonial center had been. It was now a massive dock with a dozen cranes loading seven enormous cargo ships. The cranes stacked shipping crates like they were Lego blocks. Two thousand cargo ships a year come and go from this busy port. Underneath these docks, owned by the Georgia Port Authority, are the remains of the Irene Mounds. Underneath the parking lot is the sacred burial grounds of the easternmost town of the Mississippian culture.

Each crane had its own series of squeaks and beeps. When all seven of them were working in concert, techno music was produced. The tide had been going out for a

couple of hours by this time, but if I stopped rowing for five minutes I ceased to make progress. As I sat in this doldrums listening to techno, two tugboats began pulling one of the fully loaded cargo ships away from the dock with Amsteel ropes. I could feel their powerful engines drawing me towards them and I rowed towards the little Back River as hard as I could.

The *Rongo* is shaped very much like a musical instrument. As I was drawn into the propeller of the *David Cooper* a terrifying sound came from my hull. At first it sounded like the carbonization of a freshly poured beer. As I drew closer to the tug the sound grew more akin to hail hitting plexiglas. These deck hands obviously have little regard for life. Luckily they finished their task before the *Rongo* was chopped to driftwood.

Over the next two hours there were northeasterly winds of 10mph. My boat gravitated in the troughs of the 4' waves, beam to the weather, because my daggerboard is too far aft and its nose is too small to give yaw control. So I dropped a drogue overboard (a bucket with holes drilled in its sides tied to a short rope connected to the stern). This slowed me down a bit but it simplified steering.

A couple of hours later a large grey motorboat approached me from the south-east and pulled up alongside my vessel. The words “Marine Patrol” were stenciled on it in white. A serious looking police officer stepped onto the deck and said, “Young man, we need to talk.” It was my first time being pulled over. I bit into the bitter end of some mountaineering rope on a kite spool and threw the spool onto his deck. He caught the spool and drew a figure eight on a cleat with the yellow rope, while I pushed off his side with a spare oar. He asked me for my ID and my social in a professional way. I responded to all of his questions with, “Yes, Officer.”

“You're from New Hampshire?” “How long have you been here?” “How long have you been in the water for today?” “You rowed here from Houlihan?” “You came too close to the cargo ships.” “There's some big money at play here so for the sake of your own safety you need to stay out of the shipping lanes.”

So what did they think I am, a terrorist? I asked the police officer where I could travel that was not in a shipping lane and his response was, “This whole river is a shipping lane!” I could feel myself becoming very sad and angry. The federal government stole this land from my ancestors long ago. They forced my great grandmother's great grandmother to walk from here to the deserts of Oklahoma and now the entire river was deemed the personal property of the state and a few multinational corporations.

The cop disappeared into the cockpit to run my numbers. He conferred with someone on his VHF radio for ten minutes, then he re-emerged and said, “All right, captain, when you see a cargo ship coming, you need to pull over onto the South Carolina side, drop anchor and wait for them to pass, OK?”

“Yes, Officer.” He handed back my ID and my rope. “Do you feel safe in this thing?”

“I'm Cherokee Indian.” With that he started up both of his four stroke engines and continued upriver.

A few hours later I was rowing east past downtown Savannah as the sun set over the Tallmadge Bridge. Like most people, my first introduction to Savannah was by Robert Louis Stevenson in his book, *Treasure Island*, which I read a decade ago. In *Treasure*

Island Savannah is the place where Captain John Flint has died of sclerosis of the liver before the story begins. It is on his deathbed in Savannah that he gives his last command, "Fetch aft the rum, Darby!" Then he hands Billy Bones a map of Treasure Island. The book had a drawing of Flint's map on the cover with an X marking the location of his buried treasure.

What I saw before me was a row of old brick buildings fronted by a narrow boulevard. Behind the buildings a bunch of trees extended into the distance, punctuated by steeples, cornices and cupolas. Most visitors can report that Savannah is a beautiful city. It was spared the destruction visited on Atlanta by a hair. General William Tecumesh Sherman intended for Savannah to be the end of his triumphant march to the sea, bringing 70,000 troops with him to burn it to the ground at the end of the Civil War.

Like any practical capitalist, Savannah's mayor sent a delegation out to meet Sherman as his troops approached the city. The delegation offered to surrender the city without a shot if Sherman didn't burn it down. Sherman accepted and stayed a month. Then he marched his troops to Columbia, South Carolina, and razed it to the ground. The first African church also sent out a delegation to meet with Sherman before he left town. Sherman offered much seized coastal lands to freedmen as a result.

A faux old fashioned riverboat (the *Susie Taylor King*) full of tourists drifted by. Some smiled and waved while listening to the "Narrated Harbor Sightseeing Cruise" while on its way from the Weston Hotel with an onboard trumpeter playing the Gilligan's Island theme song. (The narrator on this cruise omits any mention of African Americans or the Native Americans high holy grounds and tells only white history. Susie Taylor King taught slaves how to read.) I could see tourists on the old Yamacraw Bluff of Bay St under the gold dome of City Hall. As I drifted by the Army Corps of Engineers depot I noticed that they had a steep bay for putting in boats. A family of raccoons foraged for roots on the perimeter.

I was turning into the Fig Island Turning Basin of Hutchinson Island. In the far distance I could just glimpse the blue tops of the natural gas silos on Elba One. I pulled a mag light from my book bag and placed it in a box of rope beside the daggerboard trunk. A red speedboat came whipping down the shipping lane. I flashed my light at them and they continued around the tip of the island, reversed course and headed back to investigate. The boat pulled up beside me and a man in uniform asked if I was all right. I told him I was but he didn't believe me. There were six men on board and the words, "US Coast Guard" were emblazoned across the boat's hull in white.

"Where're you headed?" the sailor yelled. "Thunderbolt Ramp."

He smiled and looked at his companions, who were also amused. "You're never going to make it to Elba One! The tide is coming in and it's going to push you back upriver at six knots."

I continued to row just to keep a true course. "I'll be all right guys, I'll just sleep here and take the morning tide out. Who owns this property here?" I received no answer so I just rowed away. I grabbed my spare oar and jumped off the bow before my pocket ship touched the sand. A second later the boat pulled up alongside me on the beach. I picked

up my heaviest anchor and threw it onto the sand 10' in. As I started towards the dense canopy of the maritime forest an army of fiddler crabs retreated into their caverns. Epiphytes such as resurrection fern, Bartram's air plant and Spanish moss convened in the branches of the stout live oak. Slash pine, red cedar and red bay competed for sunlight.

This spot on Hutchinson Island was the location of an ancient fishing village of the Guale Creek and Yemassee Indians. They inhabited this Island as far back as 1150 CE. The Guale descended from the Mississippian culture of Illinois. They numbered 4,000 at the height of their civilization in the coastal areas of Georgia. By 1684 the Guale nation had been removed. Aggressive attacks by the British backed Westo and diseases from the Spanish Missions diminished the population to 1,215 by 1715. The Majority of Hutchinson Island is a shell midden composed of the Guale's compost piles. The calcium loving species of plants that call this island home are fortunate to be on this end of the island because it is inaccessible and therefore resistant to development.

"Wait!" one of the sailors yelled. "Can you bring your boat up alongside ours?" At that moment one quarter nm away a cargo ship was headed upstream. It was passing between Fort Jackson and Barnwell Island, turning the placid river into Class Four rapids in its wake. I complied with their wishes and maneuvered alongside their boat.

As I pulled up one of them asked, "Do you have any rope?"

Another answered for me, "He has a shit ton of rope."

Another asked, "Do you have any hooks that you can be towed from?"

I showed them the bull hook through my bow. They asked me to remove the rudder and tiller mechanism from the stern, so I did. I boarded their vessel and had a seat as directed. They gave the *Rongo* 20 yards of slack and she trailed behind. As they accelerated the *Rongo* fishtailed back and forth violently. She was front heavy without my weight in the back and she pushed water because of it.

The Coast Guard slowed down and moved all five of my anchors to the middle and back of the boat. Then we were off again. One of the sailors sat down on the trunk across from me and leaned against the railing *Rongo* was tied to. He was holding a flashlight, a pen and a yellow paper on a clip board. "What were you up to out here tonight?"

I told him that before I fully waterproofed my dinghy's interior or attached my mast and sails, I needed to see how my boat handled in all conditions. The four sailors around him seemed to silently nod their heads in consent. The sailor across from me asked for my ID, then he asked me the size of my vessel and its name. He made marks on paper, while another sailor worked the CB radio. The Savannah Fire Department was giving me permission to moor at their private docks beside the Marriott for the night. In less than three minutes we were there at the site of the 1996 Olympic Yachting competition.

One of the sailors asked me how heavy my boat was. I told him each half was close to 300lbs, so it could be 1,000lbs fully loaded.

"Each half?" he asked.

"Yes, it splits in half."

"Did you weigh it or are you just guessing?"

"I'm just guessing."

"Well, it looks light to me." He reached down and grabbed onto the bull hook through

Rongo's nose and he lifted her out of the water and half onto the dock. Another sailor ran to his aid and together they were able to lift her onto the cement dock.

"Wow, you guys are strong," I said. The sailor with the yellow paper asked me if I had a whistle or noisemaking device on board. Considering whose dock we were on I didn't want to mention my bottle rockets. A cloud of mosquitos hovered around us. I smacked at my sunburnt arms. He checked a couple more boxes and handed me the paper. I folded it up and put it in my pocket without looking at it.

Another sailor said, "You can keep that as a souvenir. Elba One is nine miles away. You never would have made it tonight."

"So I only rowed three miles in ten hours?"

"You only rowed three miles in ten hours. (In reality I had rowed eight miles.) Is this your first boat or your second," the sailor asked. "Why did you build it?"

I told him, "It is my first boat. I was working as a set designer for a couple of theatre companies back in New Hampshire, afterwards there was all this wood left over. I decided to use my feeble carpentry skills to build this. I guess I'm not much of a sailor."

He walked over to the boat, pointed at some of the hardware and said, "I'm really impressed by all this, you came all this way and there isn't any water inside." He reached inside the *Rongo* and touched the epoxied birch interior. "Why is this still sticky? When did you finish this?"

"I finished it today, it's still sticky because I fiberglassed it back in New Hampshire three months ago and it wasn't 70°, more like 50°."

"Oh, so it never cured right? Did you weld this anchor?"

"No, a friend of mine made it for me."

"Why did you move here from New Hampshire?"

"I came here to play in your awesome waterways and for the art scene here." As we spoke an officer was holding a mag light over the *Rongo* so that three of the sailors could take better pictures with their cell phones.

"Can you have this boat out of here by seven o'clock tomorrow morning?"

"Yes sir!"

"If your cell phone got wet and your friend had called 911, hundreds of us would have been mobilized to search for you tonight so we are giving you a warning. You are forbidden from operating this vehicle any more tonight."

"Yes sir!"

"Don't ever take this boat into the ocean!"

The six sailors loaded back into the speedboat. "Remove all of your valuables from the boat tonight before you leave this dock."

"Yes sir!" They started up their engines and I said, "Thank you so much for your help. I'm sorry for wasting your time tonight."

"It was no problem," the captain said as the boat sped away upstream.

I slept in the *Rongo* on the docks that night. In a construction zone next to the docks a new luxury hotel was taking form. At 3:00 the next morning I woke up with a better understanding for why the homeless sometimes favor hard liquor over food. I slid the *Rongo* off the dock and continued on my way. It was so dark that I could barely make out the craters in the walls of Fort Jackson. I was still trying to get back into the zone and get a feel for rowing, but I couldn't because my oarlocks were squeaking.

A river at night is magic, the feeling of weightlessness, of floating not just horizontally but also vertically with only a thin membrane of American birch between me and a dark world. I passed the bight known as Runaway Point and maneuvered into the Wilmington River using the radio towers as navigational markers. At unlighted Day Beacon #18 Elba Island Cut leads cruisers into the upper Wilmington River. St Augustine Creek cuts to the southeast abeam of #18.

I passed Elba One and the Oatland Island Wildlife Center in the dark. Feral pigs and donkeys could be heard in the distance. The sun rose out of the Savannah River as I passed the bay known as "Frank Spencer Boat Ramp."

At low tide the Wilmington River is narrow and made of molasses. It carries its riches to the coastal crab nurseries in Wassaw Sound. Spartina reeds crowd both sides and micro ecosystems of papyrus float by with crabs and snails on top. Thousands of gallons per second rush endlessly from the Appalachian foothills through the Piedmont and coastal plains to the Savannah River and the sea. The world is full of such rivers. There are over 250,000 in the US. If the shape of Georgia were a torso, the river would start in the area of the heart and lungs, then become the alimentary system, flushing out through the left kidney into the Atlantic.

This river is a library of biota. In these stacks everything is written in a different language. There is a dialect for motions on the surface of water. Ripples and waves and shimmering wind. Each dialect has its own vernacular, rasps and howls, bellows and flute songs. There is a language beyond sound. I would write this river's text to put it into the language of people.

Fishing boats with oversized motors began to pass me shortly after I approached the Sam Vardoe bridge, an east/west, drawbridge that spans the Wilmington River. I could see men moving towards a small boat moored on the east side of Causton Bluff. I dug out my binoculars for a closer look. Turned out to be a tugboat and a man was moving inside the wheelhouse.

Knowing that I was now moving towards danger I rowed towards it as fast as my tired shoulders could in an effort to make it past the boat and under the bridge before it turned on its powerful engines. They started up just as I passed them. The bridge was being replaced with a taller arched fixed span bridge because the drawbridge halts traffic too often. A pontoon full of engineers motored towards me. Its captain looked like Genghis Khan does on TV. I was under the Island Expressway in a moment, drifting on the Intracoastal Waterway (mile 579.9) towards Mile Marker #29.

I removed my oars and spit down the holes of the oarlocks to silence the squeaking. Then I rowed silently through the archipelago. A dozen fishing boats of various sizes shot around the bend in the river. One after another, they came directly towards me and waked the shit out of my little rowboat, but it is a big river so in between boats I had peace. The tide had been going out for a while now, so I hardly had to row. I dropped a 6' long leeboard off the starboard side to hold my course and I dropped my drogue off the port side, to balance the lateral resistance. I found that I didn't have to steer or row again until the tide changed. So I sat there and ate a bag of trail mix, holding the tiller rope between my toes.

It seemed as though I was approaching a deserted island inhabited only by white ibis stalking small fish in the reeds. As I drew nearer the deserted island I could see grave-stones. I was passing Bonaventure Cemetery. Originally the site of Tattnell Plantation, Bonaventure became a public gravesite after the plantation house burned down. South of the cemetery boaters come upon a heavy concentration of pleasure craft related facilities grouped around a 65' fixed bridge. Taken together, the Thunderbolt Marinas amount to one of the most impressive collections of watercraft facilities to be found anywhere in the world.

The outgoing tide only had an hour left. I needed somewhere to park to kill time. I was running low on provisions so I pulled up and tied off at a floating fiberglass pier, Dock "B" of Morningstar Marina in Thunderbolt, just as the tide turned. I was parked between an 84' Hatteras and a Compaq 23. I took a quick shower in the facilities above the offices of the Freedom Boat Club and then walked down River Drive to Tubby's Tank House. In front of the restaurant stood a 10' iron cross dedicated to "All who toil from the Sea." It was planted in bricks graven with the names of Fishmongers.

The sign at the entrance to Tubby's said "Please wait to be seated" but the wait staff were all too busy making small talk to seat me so I seated myself on the porch beside two cedars that had grown together. The porch was built around the cedars and they were girdled with ropes, electrical wiring and staples from event flyers. I could barely see the Wilmington River from my seat through a gap between luxury condominiums. I could tell from their menu that their area of culinary expertise was limited to deep fried previously frozen American food.

So I got up and walked out. A few blocks away at 3017 E Victory Drive I found Chiriyā's Thai Cuisine. After receiving a menu I told the waitress that I wanted to eat outside, because something horrible happened to my shirt. I ordered the spring rolls, the red curry with chicken and a bowl of traditional pho and then went inside to wash up. Chiriyā Moore, the owner, was there behind the counter. In a Thai accent she said, "You come inside and eat, we want to see your sexy body!"

I smiled and continued to the bathroom without responding. I've had Thai food in 45 states and it is my opinion that the food was top notch, definitely worth the money. I tipped the staff a few soggy dollars and \$10 in quarters, wrapped in a plastic bag. Now that I was full I decided I was tired, so I walked back to the *Rongo* and retrieved my camping gear. Fifteen minutes later I was in Bonaventure cemetery looking for a good spot to camp. On the far end of an empty field I bushwhacked into the maritime forest and pitched my tent.

In the morning I had a can of sardines for breakfast and some canned coffee drink, which I used to wash down my vitamins and 750mg of Cordyceps Sinensis. Then I took 100mg of CBD tincture sublingually and packed my gear while it all kicked in. It was 85° out and the wind was blowing southwest. Black cumulus clouds were approaching from the northeast. As a green sailor I saw this as an opportunity. I walked back to my little dinghy and checked all the seams. Looked like she was starting to delaminate in a few places where the epoxy was chipped

but I had left 1/2" of birch protruding on all sides, so I knew I could just plane it off and reseal her later.

I lowered the halyard and hooked it up to the yard, then attached the ear rings of my lateen sail to the yard. Then I rowed out to the Isle of Armstrong side of the river. I raised my sail for the first time there. It was a great feeling. For the first time I could feel the sea foam spray from the sides of my hull and I made my own wake! However, the wind was blowing me into the tall grass so I had to lower my sail.

A Marine Patrol Boat approached from the south and then another. They were heading off two dozen speed boats approaching the no wake zone in a rush to avoid the incoming storm. It began to occur to me that maybe all these seasoned boaters knew something I didn't. However, I rowed on in blissful ignorance, past the Herb River and the Savannah Yacht Club.

The Skidaway River portion of the ICW is south of flashing day beacon #40. It was there that I raised my sail again. It began to rain but I paid it no mind. The canvas up all the way and the current was going out at full force. I'm pretty sure I was going 4 knots when the first thunder clap rolled in, five seconds behind the lightning. Fifteen minutes later I was in a downpour when lightning struck again two seconds ahead of the thunder. I was still going 3 knots when my hair stood on end. I wasn't sure if it was from exhilaration or because I was about to be electrocuted so I headed for the private pier of some billionaire for shelter.

I tied on to a cleat, threw my bags onto the dock and got out. Lightning struck the yacht club one second ahead of the thunder. I ran up the gangplank and pushed aside an iron gate that looked like it was a puppy cage in a former life. There was a gazebo on the dock and enough furniture for a dozen people to sit down, but it didn't look like anyone had been here in a long time. I sat down on the couch and opened a jar of applesauce. Then I had some pumpkin seeds and some water.

I was on Modena Drive, next to the Oceanic Institute, according to my phone. I only had a couple of hours of agreeable tide left so I had to make a quick decision whether to go on or not. My mind was racing through different scenarios and the likelihood of my survival when I heard a voice behind me saying, "What are you doing?" It was a man in a suit, advanced in years. When I am very tired my body tends to shut down all unnecessary functions. Often my ability to speak is the first to go. Had I been more articulate, I probably could have salvaged the situation. In this case all I said was, "Lightning!"

He only replied, "What?" I figured he was hard of hearing as well as blind to the weather conditions I was experiencing so I repeated my assertion, but this time I made hand signals like a mime playing air keyboard. "Lightning!" I said.

"My guard dog is going to chew you up now," he said as he removed a gate from his end of the pier. A large bull terrier appeared by his side I threw my stuff back into my bags and ran for the *Rongo* with the terrier on my heels. I turned to face him with a bag in each arm and he paused. The puppy cage gate made sense to me now as I closed it 2' away from his maw.

I rowed *Rongo* towards the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography. There was a big blue boat at the end of their dock that I considered parking next to. The tide was chang-

ing, but the wind still had my back so I hoisted my soggy canvas sail again. Within ten minutes I was going 3 knots and a pod of juvenile Atlantic spotted dolphins were playing with me. We were heading straight for an island named Burnpot. As we approached the Isle of Hope we crossed a green "No Wake" sign to starboard. A female osprey was there feeding her newborn chicks. A rainbow framed the Isle of Hope.

I passed the Isle of Hope Marina and headed for a blue ketch with a "For Sale" sign on it across from Day Beacon #48, in which there was another osprey nest. It was a 30 footer made of wood sometime in the '70s. It looked like it was freshly painted, by a two year old with Behr paint and a bottle brush. Even the instrument panel was painted over. Burnpot Island was off to port. I plowed into a wall of spartina and tied on to a tree stump. Then I got out my camping gear and headed ashore. I set up camp beside a stagnant lake that night.

I awoke at sunrise to a cacophony of egrets, oblivious to the time or the tides. I packed up my belongings and had breakfast. Then slowly rowed against the brackish current towards "The Diamond Causeway," a big (100' clearance) bridge in the distance. As I passed the third Burnpot Island in the trilogy a small camouflaged speedboat headed towards me at high speed. On the bow sat a shirtless young man with a cell phone. He wasn't wearing a life jacket. The boat came close enough to me that I could see he had a few tats and that there was no fishing gear in the boat. The boat veered to its starboard side suddenly and headed up the southern end of "Freedom Creek," hunting for salvage most likely. I rowed through its wake, the 12 mile, pleistocene island known as Skidaway Island State Park to port, Wormsloe Plantation to starboard.

After passing Skidaway Narrows, I encountered a vast swath of stately mansions off to port. They are within the premises of a gated community known as The Landings. On the starboard side I began to pass a series of untouched islands with pristine maritime forests growing on them, first of which was Pigeon Island whose west side composes the entire length of the Moon River. At Mile Marker #73 the Skidaway and Moon Rivers converge before joining the Vernon River at Possum Point.

For the next few miles I floated past the driftwood littered beaches of Green Island. On a promontory the remains of an old Spanish fort sat in ruins while feral pigs foraged around it for grubs. As the outgoing tide exposed more craggy rocks oystercatchers descended to insert their blade like bills into bivalves, severing the adductor muscle before eating them. Bridled tern and Wilsons plover skipped across the sandy beach between fallen tree limbs. Sea turtles floated in the shallow water nearby hunting fiddler crabs.

At Mile Marker #83 of the Intracoastal Waterway the Vernon River joins the Little Ogeechee River. Off to starboard about a mile away I could see Harvey Island and Racoon Key. The path to Ossabaw Island lay between these two Islands and the infamous route is known as Hells Gate. As I sailed across the river three dozen brown pelicans flew over me in formation going west. And monarch butterflies crossed by in twos. Behind me a few fishing boats from the Landings private marina on Delegal Creek were fishing in Steamboat Cut.

I was heading strait for Hells Gate. Sitting like Cerebrus in the gate's maw was a massive barge. Large pipes attached to some apparatus on the barge's stern descended into the water and black smoke billowed from its smokestacks. Off of its bow there was a sort of drilling apparatus spitting water in every direction. I could see a man holding a lever on the Texas deck. Despite all the harrowing tales I've heard of this intersection my passage was smooth and uneventful.

Once through the gate I could finally see Ossabaw Island for the first time. The Ogeechee River was pushing me towards the Atlantic Ocean at about 10mph now. The southern shores of Racoon Key passed by portside in about 20 minutes while I ate lunch. There is one park ranger to patrol the 9,000 acres of wooded uplands and 16,000 acres of marsh that are Ossabaw Island. The eastern shores of Ossabaw Island are open to the public, but if one crosses the dunes the penalty is a parking ticket.

I ran aground on the peninsula known as Bradley Point and disembarked with my camera and straw hat. I had miles of beaches all to myself. I combed the beach for sea shells that my pet hermit crabs might like to wear for three hours and came up with a hatfull. It was low tide by then and I could see that the beach was protected by a moat of warm water and a small sandbar, making it unapproachable by boat. I am a wanderer and, to me, there is nothing so wonderful as wandering itself. My joy is in the seeking but not the apprehension of new places, so a casual stroll down the edge of an exotic island satisfies my craving.

Of course, I couldn't simply return to Savannah by the same route that I had left it. So I decided that if I could escape the moat around Bradley Point before the tide had fully changed I would circumnavigate Racoon Key. With my boatload of shells I walked the *Rongo* out of the moat and headed north across the sound. I didn't raise my sail because the wind was blowing south at about 5mph. As the tide started to come in I could see I was headed straight for some unusually large waves rolling in from the ocean. I rode in the trough of the first couple before turning towards Racoon Key with a quick swing of the tiller. They lifted me 5' up and tossed me along like a surfer.

For the first time I could see sea foam spraying out from my hull and leaving a wake. It was then I realized the superiority of more hydrodynamic V-shaped hulls to mine. I was having such a good time on those waves that for a moment I thought, "Why return to land? Why not find a way to remain at sea indefinitely?" I'm certain it was a similar sentiment that drove the first mammals to become whales millennia ago.

It was right about then that I became seasick and I felt like I was going to hurl. What was worse it looked like the ocean was going to throw me onto the shores of Racoon Key unless I did something about it. So I turned the tiller and started to row north in the troughs of the waves. That was when the rollers picked the *Rongo* up and tossed her over onto me. I went completely under and bobbed back up, and so did the *Rongo*, because she was made entirely of wood. However, my anchors had fallen out, holding the *Rongo* in place 20 yards away.

First I grabbed my straw hat out of the water and put it back on. Then I snagged a half drunken bottle by its neck as it bobbed in the waves. The water was clear now because

the tide was coming in, so I could see that I was surrounded by a school of sting rays. The capsized *Rongo's* daggerboard was held in position by a bungee cord strapped to the garboards. It protruded from her hull like the dorsal fin of a whale while her rudder resembled a tail fin. I tipped her towards me a bit and hung my weight off the daggerboard like a ball keel and she spun around right away.

My wet sea bags dangled from her port side still tied in to the gunwales and my oars were still in their oarlocks, thankfully. My spare oar was floating 50 yards away, I let it go rather than attempt to swim against the tide with it. I climbed aboard and took a quick mental inventory. My pocketknife was missing. My booty of seashells had returned to the ocean and my binoculars were in Davey Jones locker. I reeled in my three cement anchors first, then my aluminum Danforth. Last I hoisted the 50lb Tungsten Plow back on deck and stowed them all toward the stern. None of them had caught but together they had made a makeshift mooring good for a moment.

All my life I have been surrounded by naysayers who would attempt to discourage my grandiose ambitions at every turn. So when a few seasoned sailors advised against taking the *Rongo* any further than a freezing placid lake in New Hampshire I not only disregarded their advice, I decided I would prove them wrong. Life is the best teacher of all and it is far more interesting than the sterile lectures of old professors. It is the role of science to grapple with chaos. It is dirty and dangerous work, but this is the only way real progress is made.



Along the rocky shores of Old Cape Ann an easterly gale was stirring. In from the sea by way of the Point, across the harbor and through the streets of Gloucester it moved boisterous. Up on the hill it sent unfastened blinds aswirling, jarred bricks from unstable chimneys, and eventually forced all the old ladies with the shawls to draw in their heads, slam down the window sashes and protest, with tight lips and shaking heads, that not for some time yet would it be safe for a body to venture out, no indeed, not even if the glass was arisen'.

Down along the wharf front it whistled through halyards, stays and the unclewled top'sls of vessels in the docks, and from the more lofty roofs picked up and skied to the clouds everything that was not made fast with at least a double hitch. The most heavenward structure down that way, the observatory tower of the fish syndicate, shook and bent as if it were not more than a church steeple, and the very top of the tower, the Crow's Nest, swayed in a way to suggest to one imaginative inmate the snapping of a whip, and to another, this one even more imaginative, possibly, the revolutions, as he put it, of a burgee to the main truck. It was a north-east gale from Newfoundland to Cape Cod, the Weather Bureau said, with some minor wrecks along the coast.

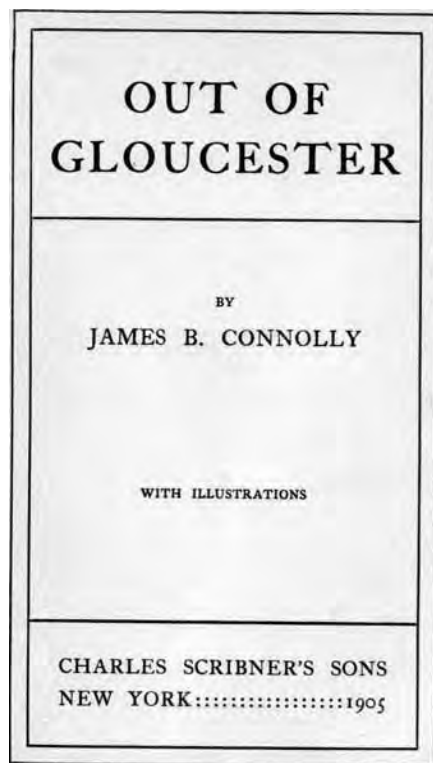
Up in the Crow's Nest they read all the weather reports, but it took more than weather reports to disturb their peace of mind. They knew that a fleet of distressed coasters had come bumping into the harbor overnight for refuge and that a string of storm flags was still flying from the roof of the Customhouse, they could see all that and a lot more from their aerie, but they were not worrying particularly up in the Crow's Nest.

It was too bad, of course, about the coasters, but coasters and fishermen weren't the same, not by a blame sight, not meaning any disrespect to the coasters. And as for the storm flags, a lot of wind out to sea was no reason that there'd be lives lost on they Banks. And just plain wind never hurt anybody. And this was only a summer gale, anyway, and it was able vessels and able seamen sailing out of Gloucester.

This breeze might give the passengers on ocean liners something to talk about on winter nights for a few years after they got back to the prairies again, but good Lord! there were skippers out of Gloucester who, if they happened to be in a hurry home, wouldn't bother to reef for this, no sir, wouldn't stop to reef, but keep her coming all the way. Lord, yes, keep her coming all the way.

They were doing very well up in Crow's Nest this tempestuous morning. With a fine drying fire in the stove, and close by the stove a new level of fresh, inviting sawdust, with what looked like a sufficiency of tobacco in sight and what appeared to be a disposition to pass it around, with hatches drawn and a new tin patch on the roof, with all tight and dry and snug, why shouldn't they be doing well?

The storm without seemed only to better the humor of those within. They hearkened to the roar of the gale outside and they all began to feel as if they had just come off watch, a hard watch in the thick 'o fog, with sheets straining and seas breaking over her quarter, and bathed in the glow that comes of that kind of thinking and wrapped twice around in the belief, on this particular morning, that in all Gloucester their quarters were not to be improved upon, could they be feeling otherwise than comfortable up in Crow's Nest?



Tommie Ohlsen's Western Passage

From *Out of Gloucester* (1905)

The helpers, who clung to the locker-seats like barnacles, felt the full measure of all this comfort. Blissfully they sat and smoked and spat toward the outlying parts of the box of sawdust. To be sure, they did have their little troubles. Every little while, in obedience to Old Peter's voice of authority, somebody or other would have to detach himself from his position on the locker and stand his watch.

With a lingering motion that suggested something of the tenacious love of a periwinkle for a low-water rock, the commanded one would tear himself off, make his way to the porthole, take a look out, and report to Old Peter, the one man there who drew pay, and who, sitting in his easy chair with his feet on the edge of the sawdust box in the centre of the room and his back to the seaward side, should have been enjoying the greatest comfort of all.

He should have been, it would seem, but for an hour now the volunteers had reported nothing but mist and whitecaps out to sea, and Peter was getting nervous. The picture of catastrophe, if one of the firm's vessels should steal in unreported, photographed itself on his mind so frequently that he felt impelled at length to ease his nerves, even at the risk of slightly wounding the feelings of an aide-de-camp or two of his staff.

"With this gale behind 'em," said Peter, by way of breaking more gently to them his very low estimate of their worth as lookouts, "with this gale behind 'em, it seems to me there ought to be some of the fleet comin' along soon. In a breeze of this kind, the fairest kind of wind to the east'ard, and enough to suit the most desp'rate sail carriers out of Gloucester, they oughter be comin' along like

a drove of wild horses pretty soon, don't you think? Anyway, maybe I better take a look for myself. No offence meant; but you lads brought up ashore, you haven't the eyes for it quite, not quite. And you're gettin' to love your comfort too well. Anyway, I callate I'd better take a look for myself."

He rose regretfully, stuffed his pipe into his pocket and had a look for himself. What he saw, offshore, was a tumble of long seas and a field of scud flying before the gale in many patches; and inshore, the swift advance of many lines of bold marked ridges piling high in a green-white tumult above the rocks of the Cape. He viewed them calmly, as a man who has fought them views before, to sea, they crested, sweeping waves and the flick-lashing of the wind whipping over them; and along the rocky shore, the bold rollers tumbling over, piling up, and crashing high, and the wake of the fierce undertow swirling back again.

He watched it for a while, this play of the sea, not alone that little part of the sea almost beneath him, and then took note of the sky above; not near so thick massed now were the clouds, as when he had last looked out, an hour ago, nor driving so turbulently, an yet they were still flying with great speed. "They'll be gone by noon," thought Peter, "and we'll walk home to dinner with the sun shining through again, or I don't know."

Musing thoughtfully over that, he drew his pipe from his pocket and struck a match. The match sputtered and went out. He lit a second, and then, then it was he saw her. Waiting for the second match to blaze, and looking unpreparedly through her porthole, but with an habitual watchfulness withal, his keen old eyes saw her. A shaft of sunlight breaking prematurely through the thinning clouds struck her and lit her up, just as his eyes happened to rest on the right spot, and he saw her, a flash of handsome fisherman, long and narrow, black hull that shone and gold stripe that glittered.

Jumbo, jib, fore, main and both topsails, in his admiration he noted every sail of her, as might any landsman who had never learned to take in hull and rig entire, the whole thing at a glance. "By the Lord, but she's an able vessel!" breathed Peter, "and her skipper, whoever he is, is asockin' it to her. Drive her, drive her, God bless you, drive her. Two tops'ls! By the Lord, but you're the lad to get her home, drive her!"

Unconsciously he had spoken the last few words aloud, and now the whole room was at his shoulder. It took such an announcement as that to wake them up. "Two tops'ls did you say? In this breeze? Where? Where?"

"Look, answered Peter with an indicating arm. "Look. See her now? Where's the glasses? Maybe I c'n make her out." He looked and he knew her. "It's the *Nannie O*, by the Lord! See her now!" They looked and saw her. They did not know her from any other vessel, but they saw the low, black hull with all the white sail tearing around the Point she was then, with her lee catheads just showing out of the water.

"Are you sure that's the *Nannie*, Peter?" inquired a doubting one at his shoulder.

"Are you sure? Wasn't it only yesterday some skipper reported leaving her seven or eight hundred miles to the east'ard only a few days ago and she not ready to leave the Grand Banks she was then, last Thursday, I think it was, and not going to leave for two or three days, and now only Tuesday."

"That skipper got in only yesterday afternoon, Peter, and he made a pretty fair passage himself," they said.

"Hush," chided Peter, "there's passages and passages. It's Tommie Olsen himself. Ain't he a dog though? Four lowers and two tops'ls, his decks awash to the hatches, two men to the wheel and the rest of the crew huggin' up under the weather rail, yes, and glad they're so near home, I'll bet.

Only yesterday afternoon, Walter Manning, the *Cleopatra*, in from a shackin' trip, it's him what what one o' you meant, I s'pose, Wallie reports the *Nannie* seven hundred and fifty mile to the east'ard and not goin' to leave afore Saturday night. 'Any message?' says Wallie to Tommie.

'Nothin' particular,' says Tommie. 'Might tell the old man when you get in he might be getting' a new fore gaff ready for the *Nannie*. This one we got now went to hell on the way out, fixed it up as well as we could, but if we had to jibe her over again all standin', something's liable to happen to the *Nannie* if it comes thick and there's rocks under our lee shore. Main topm'st a little sprung, but we c'n make that go a while longer, I callate.'

'And when will you be leavin' for home?' asks Wallie.

'Not afore Saturday night at dark, anyway,' says Tommie. 'We'll fish the week out, anyway. If we have good luck we'll swing her off Saturday night. If the wind's fair and we have any luck fishin', Saturday night, but not before,' says Tommie. 'Good-by. Report me to the wife, if you happen to go by the house,' and he waves his hand to Wallie as the *Cleopatra* goes shootin' by.

"So Saturday night he must've sailed and here it is only Tuesday morning. Two days and three nights, and seven hundred and fifty miles, I s'pose we c'n say he's come. I'll bet there was some draggin' of sail on the *Nannie* comin' home. Two men to the wheel to hold her, the deck jumpin', if I know Tommie, and life lines out maybe and himself with his arm hooked into the main riggin' all the way home. Maybe I that's sailed with him don't know."

"The wind must've been fair all the way," hazarded somebody over by the stairs, "when she made such good time."

"Fair enough if it's the same way to the east'ard as it's been here at Cape Ann the last three or four days. Tommie wouldn't want it any fairer than this. It oughter suited Tommie like a fish on every hook, abaft the beam and plenty of it. That's what pleases Tommie, wind anywhere along there, abaft the beam, over the quarter.

Man, I mind how pleased he was that time we put into that Norwegian port up to the no'the'ard just afore we left for home that summer, after Tommie'd made that long cruise for new halibut grounds. We went clear up to Spitsbergen afore he stopped that trip. The Lord knows how many thousand miles we sailed the *Nannie* on that trip. I know we got as far as some of them North Pole hunters ever gets. At eighty north I know we was catching halibut, but the ice chased us south again.

The *Nannie O* wasn't no polar-boat, you see, full of solid beams inside and with grub for about four hundred men and dogs for four years, and so Tommie flew before the ice, and that's the time he put into this Norwegian port. What was the name of it, now? Ha? Christiansund, where you shoot in the harbor at one end and out the other. 'Twas away far-

ther north than that. Stamsund? No, I mind that too. No, not Ellingsund, but some name like that. Anyway, up that way it was, some sund port up there to the no'the'ard.

Tommie, you know, was born somewhere up in Norway in one of them sort of bays, fjords they calls 'em, up near them cod fishing islands, the Lofodens. But he came away from there so early that it didn't leave any bad effects. You know what I mean. There's some able fishermen up there, let me tell you, but they don't have the vessels nor the gear we have.

There's where they go out in open boats no bigger than one of our seine boats, not so big sometimes, with just one square sail in the middle and they can't hug no nearer than six points to the wind, though in their national pride, as you might say, they'll tell you they c'n get within five points and sometime four, which is fool talk on the face of it. For with one square sail in the middle of her and no keel to amount to anything and loose rock in the bottom for ballast, how could they?

Anyway, out they go, and in the winter, too, fifty or sixty miles off shore, and of course, they sometimes get caught, a lot of 'em, and don't come back. I see by the paper the other day where a hundred of 'em as lost lately in one gale.

Now, Tommie was brought up to that when he was a little boy, and when he comes over this side, why he was just ripe for Gloucester. He learned fast. You c'n just imagine how a big fast able Gloucester schooner would hit a Norwegian boy who'd been having to go out and ketch fish in open boats.

Anyway, he warn't fishing out o' Gloucester many years afore he begins to get ideas about things, being a husky, intelligent lad and not scared of anything that ever came out of the sea. He got chances with the best skippers out o' Gloucester. He got a lot of ideas about carryin' sail, 'specially. One thing he got good and hard in his head was that a real skipper never takes in his mains'l while anybody else in sight's got one standing.

And when he did get that into his head, an' you now how the right kind of a boy'll go to the limit to be as good as somebody he admires, well when Tommie after fishin' with half a dozen of the craziest sail carriers out of here, when he'd been with them a while and then gets a vessel of his own, why it got so that men with families used to talk it over on the corner afore they shipped with Tommie. Of course, Tommie had sorta soaked in that atmosphere, as you might say, by that time.

Well, this time I'm telling about he was in what I call the proper temper to try some sail carryin'. The few years he'd been skipper up to a while afore this he'd been in old plugs, but, beginnin' to do pretty well, the firm built him the *Nannie O*, and Tommie cert'nly thought he was fixed then. And he had a right to think he was, for if ever an able vessel sailed past Eastern Point it was the *Nannie O* in her younger days.

And he did love that vessel! Man, but I mind how his eyes used to shine every time he took a look at her. 'Ain't she able-lookin'?' he'd say, and look around to see that everybody else thought so, too. Even now, looking at her coming into the harbor, you don't have to her twice to see she's an able vessel. And if she's able now, think what she must have been afore she was druv to death. She's got iron hoops around her now from chain plates, fore and aft, to hold her together, and the signs are in her where she spits oakum reg'larly.

But this time I'm telling you she was only two years old, and able!, able, I'm telling you, able as Tommie himself, and Tommie is able. I've seen him, when I was on the *Nannie O*, take a buoy line and throw the bight of it around the main boom, the best manilla line, mind, thick as clothesline, I'm telling you shore people, if there's any here, and pull on that with one finger, the long finger of his right hand, steady pull, and break it. I call that an able man, and that's what Tommie did and c'n do to this day, and he's getting old now, too."

"How old, Peter?" asked one of the kind that must always have the details of things.

"O Lord, I dunno. I mean old for his age. Lord, he's got just as much fire now as ever he had. You just try to cross his bows once and see. But, anyway, he had the fire in him this time. He was the right age, I call it, for a man like him to take chances, in the middle thirties, not too long married, and restless as a cat if he was so much as a week way from home.

He cert'nly was restless that trip, kept things jumping! If you'd only seen the way he drove into that port in Norway, a heavy no'therly gale. We threw her into the wind just long enough to pick up the pilot, I remember him just as well, a big lad all oiled up, and I mind how we gaffed him over the rail like a big broad-backed halibut, with the salt water runnin' off him.

He could talk pretty good English, this lad, like a lot of them Norwegian pilots, and he begins to talk as soon's he's found the deck under his feet. First he sings out to take in tops'ls and reef the mains'l. It'd done you good to see him wave his hands and give orders. 'You will drown,' says he.

'Drown a dogfish!' says Tommie. 'The *Nannie O* carried her tops'ls to here, and I callate she'll carry 'em a few miles farther.'

'But she cannot.'

'But she can,' says Tommie.

'Then I will not, will not, take the responsibility,' says the pilot.

'Then you needn't. Who in the name of creation asked you to?' says Tommie. 'All you got to do is standby and pick out the buoys, an bime-by collect your fees, and I'll tend to the handlin' of her.'

It was blowing a livin' gale, mind in from the no'the'ard, and Tommie druv her in for this queer named port with four lowers and two tops'ls like you see him comin' past the whistling buoy now if you look out the porthole. There was one of them tourist steamers was passed on the way, one of them big steamers that'd been up to see the mid-night sun, I s'pose, and the passengers was huddled up on deck and watchin' us. I mind how some of 'em pulled out their handkerchiefs and waved them at us. Oh, but Tommie liked that!

'We oughter have our flag to the main peak,' he says, 'to show 'em what she is.'

'He looks aloft to see in his mind how the flag'd look, and the more he looks aloft the more ideas he gets. 'Yes, and the balloon and stays'l to her, she'd stand it. I know she'd stand it. She's able for it, I know,' he says, and he looks up at her top sticks, they was bending then like two whips and some of us was having a cold chill to think he'd try it.

But he shakes his head at last. 'Twouldn't be seamanlike, would it? It'd be like putting on airs being so close to port. Twouldn't it, Peter?' he says, turnin' to me, though he didn't gen'rally ask for advice, and I said it cert'nly would.

We was getting into the harbor then, which was the other side of an opening about forty feet wide, where the ends of two quays didn't quite come together. It was a nice little harbor inside, but crowded this time with all kind of craft, all in from the gale.

'Is there room, do you think, Skipper?' I says when we began to get pretty near.

'Oh, we oughter be able to squeeze in,' says Tommie.

'You must not, you must not,' says the pilot. He'd been a sort of passenger since we'd got the channel fixed in our minds, but now he was comin' to life again, assertin' his authority like. 'You must not, you must not,' he says, speakin' up to Tommie.

'Hush,' says Tommie.

'But I won't take the responsibility,' says he.

'I'll take it off you,' says Tommie.

'But I'm pilot,' says he.

'But I'm skipper,' says Tommie.

'But you must not,' says he.

'Mustn't hell, says Tommie, getting' mad. 'Let her swing,' he says to me at the wheel. 'Give the *Nannie O* a full and let her roll!' And through the passage she went flyin' and the waves from under her bow went up against the quays like she was an ocean liner hooked up.

And when she got in! On the deck of every vessel in the harbor they crowded to see who was the strange schooner comin' in carryin' her tops'ls when everything under sail that day had come in with what they had in the way of lower sails reefed down. Tommie went to the wheel himself and, man you ought've seen him shoot her! Up she came, and whing! My soul, I thought she'd go another quarter-mile the way he slammed her into the wind! And she would have, only just in time he sings out and cl-i-i-nk! over goes the anchor, and whr-r-r, down comes the jibs and fores'l, an there we was all standin'.

Our mains'l was shakin' in the wind wild as could be and the reef points on it cracking like a hundred whips, but there we was sure enough right in the middle of them all, with their eyes poppin' out at us. 'Break out her flag to the main peak and let 'em know what country this one's from,' says Tommie. And we flies our big, new ensign, and in a second, from a half dozen steamers 'round us and four or five steam yachts, if there was one I'll bet there was a hundred people, men and women, flashed out little American flags on sticks and waves 'em up and down like crazy people. Warn't we surprised, though?

There was a big steam-yacht almost alongside us, and 'From what port do you hail?' sings out a fellow from the bridge of her."

'Gloucester,' sings out Tommie, with his face flushin' and his eyes shinin' out through the rain and salt water drippin' from his face.

'By God!' sings out the steam-yacht fellow, 'I knew it, only a Gloucester fisherman would do it or could do it. Come aboard, won't you Captain, and have dinner with me?'

'There's twenty-two of us all told,' says Tommie, kind of remindin' him like.

'All right,' says the steam-yacht lad, he was game all right, 'come aboard, the twenty-two of you,' and we went aboard half an hour later, all but the cook, who'd been sent ashore for grub and the letters, and we had dinner in the cabin of the millionaire's yacht.

Well, we was at that dinner, when the talk of yachts and fishermen came up. Tommie'd been telling of some sailin' done by Gloucester fishermen, some fast passages

from the Banks mostly. Of course, he didn't forget to tell a few things about his own *Nannie O*, while he was about it. One of them *Valkyries*, some of you here that's always talkin' yachtin' I'll remember, one of 'em was just then comin' over to race for the America's Cup off Sandy Hook.

'Now, how do you think you'd make out with her?' asks this millionaire, a sugar millionaire he was, I think. 'How would your vessel and the *Valkyrie* make out in a race?'

'An ocean race?' asks Tommie.

'Yes,' he answers.

'We wouldn't have to wet our rail,' says Tommie.

'How do you make that out?' asks the yachting fellow.

'How else could it be in an ocean race?' says Tommie. 'We're built for heavy weather and yachts ain't. They're aloominum, or some other queer metal, that's about as thick as a coat o' spar varnish, and we're three-inch oak. They race a vessel about four times and then they have to break her up for old junk, while with us, it's eight or ten years afore a vessel gets real loose, loose so the men have to wear rubber boots in the fore-hold. No sir, aloominum and three inch oak ain't the same thing.

No sir, the *Nannie* was built to stay to sea in North Atlantic winters, and in the worst part of the North Atlantic, the shoals where the fish feeds; but these yachts, so far as I c'n see, they're built 'bout as stiff as window sashes, and they do most of their cruisin' in sight o' land. Of course they do sometimes cross the ocean, I know that, but Lord, the care they take when they do! And at home, if it looks bad, they're forever runnin' to a harbor.

Now, says Tommie, imagine what they'd say of a fisherman in Gloucester if he was to up anchor and come home every time he saw a breeze making. S'pose he could get in every time, though of course he couldn't, for he'd be caught way offshore, two or three or four hundred miles or more sometimes. But s'pose he did spend his time dodgin' gales? He do a lot of fishin' wouldn't he. And he'd get lots of men to ship with him, wouldn't he? So our vessels must be built strong. And in an ocean race now,' Tommie shook his head, sad-like, to think what a Gloucester fisherman misses for not getting' chances in ocean races.

'Do you mean to say that you would race your vessel against the *Valkyrie*, say across the ocean?' asks the yachting sharp, after studyin' Tommie awhile.

'Race the *Nannie* against the *Valkyrie* across the ocean?' Tommie looks at the steam-yacht lad like he was somethin' queer came up in the trawls. 'Why, if I thought the *Nannie O* couldn't beat any blessed yacht of her length afloat across the Western Ocean, I'd sell her for a wood carrier to some Nova Scotia trader, in my life I would.

Race her against the *Valkyrie* across the ocean? Why 'twould be a sin and a shame, why, don't you know these cup challengers goes over under storm sail and we've got everything in God's world to put on the *Nannie*?'

'But if it is light weather, wouldn't she have sail enough to creep along as fast as a fisherman and...'

'Would she creep along?' says Tommie. 'and do you callate the *Nannie* can't waltz along in moderate weather, a nine or ten knot breeze now, what?'

'And if it comes to heavy weather,' goes on the yachting chap, to finish up his argument, 'she'll have sail enough anyway.'

Tommie brought his fist down on the table at that, the dishes rattlin' against each other like ten pins. 'The Lord forgive you, but can you, a man that a knows enough about the sea to be runnin' a big steam-yacht like this, can you imagine a breeze when I'd be keepin' only a storm sail on the *Nannie* if I was racin' her? This vessel of mine is a Gloucester fisherman that was built to go halibuting' to go halibutin', man. Look here, now, when does this *Valkyrie* leave for America?' Tommie was ready to explode.

'Oh, but you couldn't start with her on even terms,' says the yachting lad, 'because she's due to leave England today. That's what put me in mind of her. She's to leave Plymouth today and that's a thousand, yes twelve hundred miles, nearer America than this place is.'

'To-day?' says Tommie. 'That's too early. I want to go ashore and send a letter or two home, maybe telegraph the owners. But tomorrow, yes, we'll sail tomorrow We're bound home anyway. We only put in here to get grub and ice and water and send letters home. What time today will this yacht sail?'

'I don't know exactly. Along in the middle of the day sometime.'

'Well, let's average it up and call it twelve o'clock,' says Tommie. 'Now, tomorrow at noon I swing the *Nannie O* off for Gloucester. I'll give that *Valkyrie* her ten or twelve hundred mile start, and if I don't beat her across the Western ocean, ten or twelve hundred mile and all, then you c'n call my vessel any kind of a name you want. Put the *Nannie*'s whole sail to her storm sail to offset the thousand mile start.

Well'll sail the *Nannie* to Gloucester and they'll sail the *Valkyrie* to New York. Gloucester may be a couple hundred mile nearer than New York. But she'll have a thousand miles on us then, which don't matter. Good-by,' says Tommie. 'I'm goin' aboard to see what the cook's got for the passage, but tomorrow at twelve you give us your whistle and we'll up jibs and off for Gloucester, and bime-by we'll see.'

'If you beat her,' says the millionaire, 'I'll give you something handsome for the sport of it.'

'Never mind the something handsome,' says Tommie. 'But I'll reach the other side afore that bloody English yacht or sink the *Nannie O*.'

'Hooray!' says the steam yacht lad, 'and here's to,' he fills the glasses all around, 'What will we drink to now? Come now, Captain, a toast, what'll we drink to?'

'Plenty wind,' says Tommie.

And we got plenty wind. We never waited till the next day. We goes aboard, Tommie gets a letter from the cook, reads it two or three times, jumps on deck all at once, says, 'Break her out,' and we turned to. It was blowin' worse than when we came in.

The steam yacht lad was there on the bridge in his raincoat. 'I say, Captain, but you're not going to start today?' he hollers out to Tommie.

'Why not, ain't this the day?' Tommie hollers back. We were heaving on the anchor then and Tommie looks around. We all looks around. We thought maybe that word had come that the *Valkyrie* had been delayed.

'Think of the risk, the needless risk,' says the yachting sharp.

'Risk?' says Tommie, 'risk with the *Nannie O*? The Lord forgive you, you don't know her.'

She was beginning to pay off then, with Tommie at the wheel and the millionaire lad walking aft to keep up the talk. He sings out, 'Can I cable any message to the other side for you, to the owners, say, to let them know you are coming?'

'The owners, no,' says Tommie. 'But hold on, I nigh forgot, you might telegraph my wife and tell her I'm on my way home.'

'All right. What'll I say?'

'Just say,' says Tommie, comin' home, Tommie, just like that. And send it to Mrs. Captain Tommie Ohlsen, Gloucester.'

'Nothing more, Captain?'

'Nothing more,' says Tommie.

'But won't I say you're going to hurry? Maybe she'd like to know you're hurrying.'

'Good Lord!' says Tommie, 'she'll know that without writing it down,' and he puts the wheel down and swings the *Nannie* off, and bangs her out the harbor.

So out we goes and from then on we had it. None of you here have been thorough it, that I know, one of them crazy drivers of skippers making a passage. Some of you, maybe, have heard how they come from the Banks, six or eight hundred or a thousand miles, nothing but a high sea to the lee quarter and a roarin' wake all the way.

Well, certn'ly we had it across the Western Ocean that time, four thousand miles, or forty two hundred I think they said it was from that Norwegian port to Gloucester. Well we had it, four thousand and odd mile of sea rushin' by, with two men lashed to the wheel, life-lines out, and hatches battened most of the time, everybody on deck hangin' on to somethin', the lee rail buried gen'rally and once in a while her sheer-poles going under.

Day in and day out we had it, the wind singin' through her rigging, boom jaws creaking, the planks in her deck quiverin', and her mast-heads strainin'. Four thousand and odd mile o' that, it was enough to drive a man crazy. There was some of the gang took to their bunks that passage just to get away from the strain of it, hauled the blankets over their heads so's they wouldn't have to listen to the everlasting singin' up on deck. Yes, sir, from her trucks to her keel she was groanin'.

But Tommie! Lord, he enjoyed every foot of that passage. He'd stand on quarter over by the main rigging or maybe sometimes aft by the corner of the house for a change. He'd be lookin' for'ard the length of her or over the rail and then up. 'Lord,' he'd say, 'but ain't she able, the *Nannie*! And ain't she beauti-ful? She's certn'ly an able dog, this one!' And he'd shake his head and smile at whoever was to the wheel, and if whoever was to the wheel didn't say she was beautiful and able, if he didn't speak right up and say she was the ablest vessel he ever stood on, and the most beautiful, if he didn't speak right up, he'd get nothing but black looks from Tommie for the rest of his watch, for Tommie certn'ly loved the *Nannie*.

All he studied that passage was how to keep more sail on her, he did most of his sleeping in the daytime so he could watch her better at night. 'It's at night a fisherman gains,' he'd say. 'Any vessel at all c'n sail in the daytime, but it takes a fisherman to do her best sailin' at night.'

And of course that's so. Everybody knows if you leave sail on your vessel all night she'll make great gains afore morning, that is, if the other fellow is careful and takes some of his off. The way the *Nannie*'d come along in the dark, ten, eleven and twelve

knots, it warn't nothin'. Thirteen, fourteen, yes and fifteen knots it was sometimes. The *Nannie*'d just eat' em up, and Tommie walking the deck all night keepin' the sail to her and watchin' her.

Whenever he was ready to turn in, he slept about three hours in twenty-four all the way across, the last thing he'd say afore his head went down the cabin step'd be, 'Keep sail on her and call me if it moderates.' Most skippers I sailed with used to say afore they turned in to call 'em if it breezed up, but Tommie used to say to call him if it moderated. Though we wouldn't need to call him even then. If ever she stopped her leapin' for two minutes he could feel the change in his sleep. Her gettin' back on a more even keel used to roll him away from the lee corner of his bunk, I s'pose, and in another minute he'd be on deck.

There was an ungodly big stays'l Tommie was forever wantin' to see on the *Nannie*, and I mind we must've been halfway across one day when he took it into his head that the *Nannie*'d look perfectly beautiful with that stays'l up there between the topm'sts. That was the day he put her under the nose of a big liner.

Wait till I tell you about the liner. 'Here's one of them English liners comin', and I know they'll be watching us,' Tommie said when he first sighted her, 'and we might as well show 'em how an American vessel can sail.' So up goes the stays'l. From her trucks half-way to the deck it came, and it about filled all the space fore and aft between the masts. The whole crew had to bear on the after sheet to get it flat enough to suit Tommie, and then, when we couldn't do anymore with it by straight fore-and-aft haulin', he has us run a piece of line up and down from a ring bolt under her rail across the sheet, and we all swayed on that again.

You wouldn't think a man in mid-ocean would bother with the fine points o' sailin', especially when there was plenty of wind as it was. But Tommie did, and you'd better believe that sheet was some flat when we got through with it. Tommie looks for'ard, the *Nannie* was almost buryin' herself afore he put the stays'l on her at all, but with the stays'l on her, why, she was sailin' pretty much on her side.

'My soul, Skipper!' says Albert Frazer to the wheel with me, both of us fast to the wheel, me to the wind'ard and with a line to the starboard bitt, and him to looard with a line to the port bitt, 'My soul, Skipper! If that don't take the spars out of her it'll certn'ly throw her down,' says Albert.

'Hush, boy,' says Tommie, 'hush boy, not the *Nannie*.' And he looks aloft. 'But she do look beau-ti-ful with that stays'l, don't she?' And he looks aloft again, and then ahead at the liner. 'And here's the liner comin'. I'll bet they're sayin' aboard her now, by the Lord, but that's an able vessel! and pointin' their glasses at us, I'll bet, and wonderin' who we are.'

He'd hardly got that out, standin' back by the corner of the house just the other side of me, when qu-r-r, and the *Nannie* shivered. Qu-rr, it came again and she takes a lurch, and over on her side she went. The three of us aft, the Skipper, Albert, and myself, was taken off our feet. Me and Albert, being lashed, was all right, we stayed aboard. I was slammed over the wheel-box and Albert into the lee scuppers, but the Skipper, not being lashed to anything, he goes over the rail.

I didn't see him goin', bein' almost drowned myself, but when I looked up he was gone. I hollers, and in a second Albert hollers back. 'All right,' he says, and there he was with just ahold of the Skipper's wrist, and the Skipper ahold of the rail, but being dragged under the *Nannie*'s overhang. 'Twas nothing but his awful grip that saved him the fingers of one hand hung onto the rail all the time. That awful strength in them wrists and fingers of his saved him. Did I tell you how he could part a buoy line pulling by one finger? Yes? Well, he climbs aboard.

'By the Lord,' says he, 'but there's the devil's own suction under that overhang.' And that's all the thought he gives it. We was worryin' then about the *Nannie*, afraid she was goin' to roll clean over, and stay over maybe, but no. Just as the Skipper climbs back over the rail she stops rollin' down, and the skipper, grabbin' the wheel quick, she begins to come up fine. She was all right again in about two minutes, but her rails was hardly beginnin' to show signs of raisin' again afore the skipper begins to talk again.

'Quite a squall that, Skipper,' says I.

'Squall', 'twasn't a squall did that, Peter. An unlucky sea, an unlucky sea, Pter.' He wouldn't give in, d'y'see, that them sails was too much for the *Nannie*. 'If 'twas any other vessel,' he goes on, 'she'd been hove down altogether. Shoot her under the bow of that liner, give her a full now!' he says, 'and let's see what she'll do. Let her swing now!' he says, and let's see what she'll do. By the Lord, but she's an able dog, any other vessel and her spars been floating out on the water now, maybe her keel up. Yes, sir, any other vessel. Do you and Albert let her have it now, Peter.'

Well, we let her have it again, and Lord! but the wind roared into her. Wh-sh, it went, and wh-sh-sh it went, and then wh-sh-sh and wh-r-r-uo it went all at once and away went that ungodly stays'l. 'Thank the Lord!' says Albert. 'Amen,' says I, but behind the Skipper's back both of us, you better b'lieve.

The Skipper looks up at the stays'l floatin' halfway up to the sky and eyes it sad-like, 'By the Lord,' he says, 'but the firm ought to change their sail-maker. Ain't it a shame?' he says, 'and we were goin' along so fine, too, and strangers lookin' to her.' And turning to us at the wheel, 'Well, we got to make the best of it, I s'pose; watch this fellow ahead now, and when I sing out, put the wheel up and shoot the *Nannie* under her nose.' And under the very nose of her we sent the *Nannie* flyin' Not much closer could we get without us or her gettin' in trouble, most likely us.

They crowds for'ard on the liner to get a look at us. I know we must've been a sight for what few passengers was peekin' down on us over the rail. Albert and me to the wheel was buried to our waists, and the Skipper hangin' on to the main riggin', on the lee riggin' so's to be nearer the liner, standin' to his knees in the wash comin' over the rail. On the bridge of the liner one of the officers holds up a megaphone and points it down to Tommie. 'Lucky for you that sail blew out, Captain,' he hollers.

'Lucky, hell,' hollers back Tommie, Tommie didn't need any megaphone. 'That stays'l never blew out. 'Twas the halyards slipped and we turned it loose. That stays'l! Good lord! this one'd carry four stays'ls if there was spars enough to hang them onto.' And you oughter seen the lads on the bridge poke their eyes at him. 'Yes,' says Tommie, lookin' back, we was leapin' past her quar-

ter then, 'yes', says Tommie, 'look at us. Look, you fish-eyed son of a rock lobster, look. You're 600 and odd feet long and eight times 'round your house is a mile, and you think you're the only thing that sails the sea. Three stacks and two screws, and you think you could take us aboard and not so much as crowd the saloon passengers on the promenade deck.

And so you could, and your bridge as high as our mast-head, but by the Lord! the *Nannie* don't need any steam gear to get her home and she'll carry her four lowers when you're rollin' funnels under.' And he shook his fist back at the liner. 'Lucky we lost our stays'l is it?' and for an hour afterwards we could hear him sputterin', 'Lucky for the *Nannie* the says'l blew out, was it?' The sparks kept comin' out of him for an hour after the lad on the bridge of the liner had spoke his piece about the *Nannie* and her stays'l.

And that's the way we came drivin' across the Western Ocean that passage. Never less than four lowers, no matter how it blowed, but more gen'rally with both tops'ls and sometimes with the big balloon."

(To Be Continued)



Gloucester Fishermen's Memorial

A semicircle of ten granite monuments, one with an explanatory plaque followed by nine monuments with plaques that have the names of 5368 Gloucester Fishermen who were lost at sea.



Working at 45° north we should expect some winter weather. We had a year round job and we must do something to justify the wages. We really did. Let's start with the fact that this was a federal job. They give a generous vacation plan. Before I retired I was earning six weeks a year. We could use it any time we liked as long as it was in January and February.

We were still locking boats into November. One year at Lock #1 we shut down the lock on Christmas Eve. There was a contractor working above the lock late into the fall. He had one crane barge that he wanted to get out of the pool in December. With a crane barge they often use the bucket on the crane like a paddle and move the barge around with it. They also break up the ice with the bucket.

The contractor called it a season on Christmas Eve and locked the barge downstream into the open water in the river below the lock and moved on to another job in St Paul. The first week in January he showed up at the lock for a visit, bringing a case of top grade booze. I believe I went home with a gratuity that day. Everyone looks the other way at those times.

Back to Lock #2 again. I started there at the end of the navigation season and learned a lot about ice. The dam has to be maintained summer and winter and that means opening and closing gates to control the level of the pool. On a weekday we would show up for work and start with a coffee break while waited to hear what adjustments the office wanted us to make. They often did that, especially after a weekend.

It was not uncommon that a boat that showed up at the beginning of the mid watch was still locking through into the day shift. The lockmen and the deck crews were outside all the time.

We would then bundle up and head out to the dam with ice chisels and safety harnesses and ropes. We would try to move a chosen gate. If it didn't want to move we would leave a little slack in the chains and climb down on the back side of the gate with our harnesses on until we were just above the water on either side of the gate. Another guy would stay on top of the dam and tend our safety lines.

We would chop the ice between the steel gate and the concrete wall until the gate dropped and took up any slack in the chains.

Sea Stories & Tall Tales

By Mississippi Bob

Winter Duties at the Locks

When the gate fell we were often surprised so it was one hand on the chisel and one firm grip on the steel gate. No one wanted to go for a swim.

Tending the safety lines was no better a job. The north wind had a couple of miles of open ice covered river to blow across. The tenders had no place in which to get warm. Tending the dam was a summer and winter job that had to be done. We tried to do our winter adjustments on the few motorized gates. Dam #2 had 20 winter gates total, two were motorized. We also had two hoist cars that could be moved back and forth to move any of the other gates.

Many locks had roller gates that also had to be adjusted from time to time. I had no experience with them but I know that sometimes during high water they got lifted clear of the water and that invited the local fishermen to slip through under them rather than wait for a lockage. Very illegal but they often chanced it.

The dam was originally powered with 32v DC power that was produced by a water wheel under the old control station that would generate electricity that would get stored in a bank of storage batteries. Before my time part of the duties of a lockman was to maintain the batteries charged so they always had enough power to swing the gates for lockage.

The two hoist cars were still on DC power. We always kept a few 32v light bulbs in the cars. They had tracks on top of the dam with each car having a long extension cord that could be plugged in at many locations along the dam.

The dam and old lock dated back into the '20s. The lock that I worked at was built in the '40s so we had a mix of vintages. During the Depression years many new locks were built, Lock #2 was one of the last to be built during that period. The 1,200' lock at Keokuk was built in the late '50s upgrad-

ing the whole system. One more lock was built later at the Chain of Rocks Canal near St Louis. Two more locks were built above Lock #1 at St Anthony Falls.

Some years the boats would leave St Paul late in November and into early December. Locking a 12 barge tow in the ice was always fun. A tow would come around the bend upriver three miles away and have to straighten out to line up with the lock. Our pool often had 4"-6" of ice. The barges could crush their way into that ice but they could not turn because they had ice up against their sides. They would back up a half mile and then aim the tow so it would make a new slot in the ice. They would do this repeatedly until they were aimed at the lock wall.

When a tow was finally flat on the guide wall we would give it the green light and they would push ahead and often fill the lock with the ice that was trapped ahead of their barges. Then we would back the tow out and close the upper gates and make an ice lockage. Getting the gates open when the water was covered with ice chunks was always work. We would push ice out of the recesses with long pike poles. These poles were aluminum, a very good conductor of heat. They would suck the warmth out of our hands through our mittens real fast.

When we got the ice down to the lower level we would move it away from the lower gates so we could open the lower gates and flush it out of the chamber by opening the upper valves. Now that the nightshift had done all the work, the day shift took over and asked, "What took you guys so long?"

Locking boats in the ice was always a big job. Most of the experienced companies knew better than to be working late into the fall. There were always some companies that tried when they thought they could do it. They were mostly southern guys who had never seen snow. started hearing about all the trouble they were having downriver. They ended up having to park some of their barges and double trip, going back for the parked barges and bringing them along. We heard all about their adventures on our radio. It was over a week after we were closed for the season before they got out of our district. I will bet that that company learned a hard lesson, stay out of Minnesota late in the fall.

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A Spring Paddle

The weather was a warm 68° with winds 5 to 10 knots at noontime. The sun was finally out after melting that 3" snow-fall two days ago. My kayak paddle had been dry almost all winter and I was dying to go back to Salt Creek and explore what the waters may have brought up north. It was April and the forecast was for showers tonight so I sped for the creek.

Arriving there I found the water was snow cold and up 8". I pushed off into the current in my little 9' kayak and paddled off looking for some springtime bird arrivals and found some.

Initially the wind was at my back and sailing upstream with my paddle blade at 90° was easy and quiet, so quiet that I surprised my first of the season black crowned night heron sneakily hiding in a leafless tree on shore. It paused for my photo shoot, then quickly flapped away. Just beneath the tree was a school of perch that missed out being its dinner.

Rounding the bend I jumped what I thought were wood ducks by their retreating high pitched call, "oowheak mdjee," as they flew upstream. This spot on the creek seems to be their springtime stopover on their way north. They share this spot with the local beaver whose artistic carvings decorate the shoreline's fallen trees. I haven't seen him for several years but look forward to so doing if I do a sundown paddle.

That tailwind had gently pushed me upstream and I slid under the pedestrian bridge and past the museum. There the wind stopped and I had to paddle against the current. Moving through the cold snowmelt water, I made it to the catalpa trees with their last fall's brown cigars just waiting for the right wind to drop them into the creek below.

A sandpiper flew off the muddy shoreline and landed on a log occupied by two very noisy geese. They didn't like my intrusion. Periodically hawks cruised overhead. Finally a kingfisher with his raspy rattling flies by, welcoming me to their spring party on the creek.

An old Irish dance song floats pleasantly through the air over the creek from a picnic party at a day shelter on an island where some grade school kids are dancing to an Irish jig. Have I stumbled upon Brigadoon this many miles from Ireland? What a happy way to spend an afternoon. The music and the dancing made my day.

After the dancers took a break, I just let the ever present current take hold of my kayak and I began paddling against that tailwind (now turned headwind). Squalls kept me dodging toward shore where the shoreline eddies helped me to make headway against the wind. Downstream I came upon those two wood ducks and tried again for a photo shoot but they just waddled away back into the deep woods. Moving downstream I glided under a sycamore tree and marveled at its springtime golf ball sized buds.

Spring and Fall on Salt Creek

By Bob McAuley

Finally I rested in an eddy, ate my candy bar and drank up for the final push against that unrelenting wind. Pressing on downstream I scared up three ducks that I did get a telephoto of. I later identified them as green wing teal. That black crowned heron was back in those trees hunting again for a meal. This time he was accompanied by a little green heron.

It was a pleasant afternoon on the water and good to see some of our feathered friends back again.

A Bumblebee on a Fall Paddle

It was a partly sunny 56° fall day when Mike and I arrived at the put in at Salt Creek. Only the rattling call of the local kingfisher greeted our arrival. The Sunday afternoon crowds watched as we assembled our wooden take apart kayaks and launched into the chilly waters.

The water was clear and almost calm but with a variable breeze occasionally rippling the flat surface into miniature waves. We paddled effortlessly north against a mild current. The leaf colors were changing in the tops of the trees first as the chlorophyll slowly drained down inside their trunks.



Mike paddled ahead and beyond him was a brightly colored sycamore tree which I photographed with Mike in the shot. After that we entered a straight channel and coasted a while, watching the waves rippling off our bows in complete silence. No bird nor human noises invaded our quiet. How peaceful it was on this cold autumn afternoon.

We resumed paddling and as we neared the pedestrian bridge I spotted a black and yellow bumblebee trapped in the water passing next to my kayak. This caused me to brake my glide and back paddle towards the struggling creature. It was buzzing its wings going around in circles on the water in my paddle eddies.

I had to help him, his struggles had stopped and maybe I was too late, but I had to try to save him, the world needs bees! I paddled alongside him and reached down with my gloved hand and brought my index finger under his wet body. I carefully raised him from sure death by drowning or becoming fish food.



I laid his soaked body on my gunwale where he looked done for with his legs spread eagled. Later my wife told me I should have given him mouth to mouth resuscitation. Instead I paddled over to Mike to show him my passenger. After I photographed him we paddled upstream towards the island past the harvest of cigars hanging from the catalpa trees.

The sun came out as we glided up to the island. After crossing beneath the second bridge I noticed the sun must have warmed my passenger for he began to crawl forward. He was alive! Hurray, I had saved his life. It isn't every day one gets to save a life. Seconds later he was gone, disappearing when I took my eyes off him to steer. Where did he go? I checked my gym shoes and pants cuffs near his last known position. Suddenly out of nowhere he went buzzing past our heads. Success! I had saved next summer's pollinator.

Life is surely grand being out with my best buddy paddling on a cool fall day.



High Noon Labor Day Weekend Part 1

The end of summer and we were off. The inspection station guy had to settle for “east” as an answer to his checklist question, “Where ya’ headed today?” We found a parking spot at the Mud Hole ramp. I left a note on *Big Red’s* dash, “out overnight, Sunday.” The rules for that sort of eccentric stuff tend to shift with the particular camp host. Sometimes we get a bill. Sometimes we have to settle for a “cool boat!”



With no further ado, underway! And we ran immediately into something usually in short supply summers here on the river, wind. In even shorter supply were sailboats. But there was one just up ahead, well sailed, nice, crisp tacks. We stopped and told ‘em so. We tooted our “steam” whistle at the ladies. They waved back. We loitered alongside and I told ‘em I’d probably sailed just about every old sailboat design similar to theirs, a Chrysler 13-footer.



The skipper asked, “Anything we might do better?”

Well, since she asked, “I’d sweat up that jib halyard a bit, move the sheet lead aft a touch, take up on the main halyard and slack your sheet, prob’ly good for a half knot, and 10° on the wind.” Well, she did ask. We sounded the whistle again and beat a hasty retreat upriver. Remarkably the sailboat came head to wind and halyards and sheets were getting heaved around and belayed. Nice goin’ ladies!

This particular river connects Missoula, Montana, to Hong Kong. This part is still being divided up and bulldozed over. But lots of it is still uncut and unbuilt. We can still stop off and swing out into about 30’ of water.

Some folks had their own river swing. We passed a kid who had just made a splash and we idled along closer, “Hey! Do’er again!” And he did. That rated one long blast, and three short, on the ship’s whistle. Then underway.

The View from Almost Canada by Dan Rogers



High Noon Labor Day Weekend Part 2

Back underway we’ve been running right along the shoreline. Some of it looks like this. Kinda classic rural.



Certainly every square inch of shoreline has somebody’s name on a deed for it. Lotsa Rich Guy Houses and lots of the residents of those RGHs are out on their docks, sitting in their matching recliner chairs. These docks are simply festooned with High Dollar Powerboats. Most of those are up on lifts (electrically operated, of course) and covered with custom fit canvas covers under custom built full length awnings. Dunno when they actually take these HDBs out away from those docks. Seems like today would be a good one for that.

The likes of us just blend in and disappear, I suspect, unless we hit that “steam” whistle. Then, almost every time we get a grin, a wave and a thumbs up. That store bought, factory manufactured whistle is powered by a thrown away air mattress pump which feeds air through a castoff shop vac hose.



Then we go from all but invisible to a funky little boat passing at walking speed with a black poodle at the wheel actually spreading a bit of joy. So all afternoon we spread a bit of quintessential American commonality to little kids splashing in the water, old farts reading the paper and sipping their warming beer and women of a certain age who seem to respond with the most animation. Shades of a ‘50s wolf whistle, maybe?



High Noon Labor Day Weekend Part 3

We are backed into a delightful hidey hole. Our cove is just about land locked, part of a rambling recreation area and the very best option we had for an overnight stop with dog walking. We are out of the wind, wakes and will likely be all by our lonesomes come nightfall. There's even a peekaboo view of the Big Lake immediately out our back door. Just how cool is that?



Over on the more populated side where there is a road and launch ramp, somebody has some sort of delusions of grandeur perhaps? That blown up swan is easily 10' high and has a gold crown. Just the thing every little girl needs for her backyard wading pool, eh?



Otherwise, this spot is kinda forgotten, right across the channel from one of Idaho's larger cities no less. Most of the boats we passed today were high dollar, high power and high maintenance.

Talk about "blending in," there were a few kindred spirits, among the mongocious 'toonboats and formidable wave generating boats that resemble minor planets with their own gravitational fields. We reversed course and tracked this guy until we caught up. My kinda way to travel. And this ol' gal was rolling in the wakes.



I'd say the wrong one is under the canopy. This old G-7 is just "hanging around." She needs to come out and play. Class shines past ostentation sometimes.



High Noon Labor Day Weekend Part 4

Every couple three years I get a wild hair. I should go check out the downtown docks in Sand Point. That'd be a cool place for a group cruise, restaurants, coffee shops, shopping, generally hyperyuppeedom. You really might think I'd remember from the time before, now wouldn't you?

From our overnight anchorage in Springy Point it was a half dozen miles to downtown. Five really low bridges and a twisty channel. These bridges are low enough that Jamie comes out in the cockpit and helps me by barking at the bridge.



It's one of those optical confusions. It all depends upon the angle of incidence.



After the highway and the walking bridge comes the choo choo train bridge.



And, then a labyrinth in Sandpoint proper.



There's another couple but you get the idea. And when we get there, donchudoo Witt signs begin in earnest. No overnight moorage. No parking, employees only. No pets, Jamie said that was getting a bit close. Maybe we should just do something else.

Judging by the number of other transient boats at this quay, I'd guess everybody decided to do something else. Underway, back under all those bridges.



Oh yeah, one more thing. This is what stands at the harbor entrance. Yeah, me too. About 30 miles back to the ramp and all day to get there.



High Noon Labor Day Weekend Part 5

This is going to sound like an excuse. I called Kate and told her that we would be delayed a few hours. The last couple hours of this trek are due west. The sun is getting a bit low and right in these septuagenarian eyeballs. We're gonna have to sit it out until Sol dips behind the hills.

Tough duty. The Riley Creek boat basin was empty when we came in. Now there's two more beached stinkpots. Other than the no swimming sign that Jamie and I didn't see, the swimming is quite superb here next to *Walkabout*. Quite delightful.



Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you. We met up with that shanty barge we crossed tracks with yesterday. We stopped, spoke to her and commenced to gam right there in mid stream. Turns out that little packet is a Berkley Eastman design. Trailerable. A bit tall for my eye but she seems to work. Their next trip is to Priest Lake. Maybe we'll see 'em up that way.



You know, for a couple introverts, Jamie and I do manage to meet our share of people. So here we sit. We'll make chow, take another dogwalk and maybe even a surreptitious dip. Summer's screaming off the end of the runway, gotta make some hay while we are waiting for the sun to shine a bit less brighter.

Admittedly there's a lot to like about the spot we're in right now.



The Lonely Roads of Late September: Part One

There we were, loaded up, hooked up, headed out and still no destination. We just got home from a week off back east in Big Sky Country. The other three cardinal points were all pretty much available. If it was north, it would be Priest Lake. West, well, we haven't made it to Roosevelt yet this year. And south, that's the way toward Button Hook Bay on big Lake Pend Oreille. Haven't been down there for several years. I think *Miss Kathleen* was still wearing her first cabin iteration. We're on a completely new boat, now, we had options. They were all good.

We decided that after we got gas at Lyle's place at the intersection of the main east west road and about the only northern route, we'd let the stoplight decide things. Green, straight ahead north. "Left," well, that was a no brainer, right? And red, well that would mean a free right turn, that would hook us with the route to Lake PdO. When, we got Miss Suzi gassed up the light had turned red. So we waited until it turned green and that's how we ended up coming north.

The run up to Granite Creek is the farthest away from "everything" once we get there. We passed two boats on trailers over the next hour or so, both headed south. The season is really over for Regular People. When we launched it had obviously been raining hard thereabouts within the recent hour or so. Our weather could likely be deteriorating more from the look of the clouds! We turned slowly north and that's how we got here at the huge, busy in summer Lion's Head campground. Solitude is what we found.

Bottle Bay was flat out deserted, also kinda exposed. We tucked into the only reliably tight anchorage for miles only open to the southwest.



When we started out from GC, I sorta had a notion that we would take the next three days to make a complete perimeter of the lake. I was even thinking we'd make it a clockwise jaunt including the Thorofare and upper lake. That's about when Jamie reminded me of all the boats we were likely to encounter up that twisting, shallow stream. So we pulled into Lion's Head and made plans for the evening until we started rolling in our normally tight hideyhole.

The entrance to a stream, less than a mile off to the west, is pretty well marked and Miss Suzi does know how to tilt up and get her toes above the bottom when needed. There's this anchorage that I have actually never seen anybody use up inside the entrance.

The old seawall extends for most a half mile. The one I remember as a kid is pretty well destroyed (storms and ice) and silted in with sand. There's a replacement wall just to seaward. It's showing its age as well. All in all this was likely the tightest hole around. Other than a couple of flocks of kayakers utilizing the portage it was very solitudinous.



One group came in, four people, four boats and two big dogs perched on the aft cargo hatches of sit on kayaks. I showed Jamie but he seemed more interested in being able to get up and walk around. We've used a couple of different kayakers to go and come from out on the hook as a main form of transport, well, he's not real keen on those limits. Those big pooches were darn impressive in doing as they were told. I guess that's what Jamie was trying to tell me, too.

I was saying about being a bit chicken to run the Thorofare alone? Well, this is sort of a best outcome, a good samaritan 'toonboater! I'm guessing the towee here doesn't carry a spare prop.



The former Drift Inn is now a house and the last structure passed on the way back into an unbuilt wilderness. I say unbuilt since it was returned from mine claims and homesteads, even moonshine still sites, over a long transition from the '30s up to the '70s. Now on a hot summer weekend day it can look like a Manhattan cab procession. But not today. A new hideyhole looked pretty good.



0430: We didn't even set cold iron, or anchor watches for that matter. Early taps, early reveille. The moon had come and gone. I left the anchor light on to shine up the shoreline a bit. There was zip nada traffic after about 1800. The last boat to exit was a sweet ol' Lyman inboard. We gave 'em a couple blasts on the steam whistle in appreciation.



Pretty cool how a whistle blast from a funky little frankenboat with mosaic sides and port holes is almost always good for smiles and waves.



Who can say where we might end up today. Seems. He's even let his coffee get cold. Sitting here next to *Hot Stuff*, the cabin heater and noodling on a design conundrum ain't all bad 'neither.

Alice has been reminding me about how, before you knowit, she's gonna be shifted over from pushing boat trailers around to pushing SNOW around. The problem at hand was to be able to haul the new to us (still un-named) snowblower around. We normally run up around the corner on down toward the lake and plow for Sandy. The ground over on that side of the hill stays softer well into the winter. *Alice* tends to churn up the surface when we are moving snow. Working with a longish

tractor and widish blade in a constricted space up next to her car and house gets to be a vexation, to say the least. I once had to take *Big Red* up there and skid *Alice* sideways a foot or two to get her one wheel drive self away from doing injury to Sandy's car.

So we took an unused boarding ladder and a few other odd parts and made a drive-on ramp that is supposed to lift ol' what's his name up clear of the snow and haul his arse around. Still a work in progress and worthy of a few minutes noodling.



While I was noodling that I almost missed the sunrise.



Guess it's getting on time to put that scratchpad away and set sea and anchor detail. I can almost see the channel marks even.



The Lonely Roads of Late September: Part Two

0630: Underway after a short clamp-down. Anchor stowed. Rode haphazardly left on deck. The mist rose about the time we needed to find the channel. This could be our last overnight this year. Time to continue the clockwise circuit southbound.

Back underway. We're running as close to shore as reasonable. Obviously we slide outboard of the hard spots and the alluvial dookie spots around the stream mouths but, just for curiosity sake, we'll get a rough, rough shoreline length for the main lake out of this. As a result of cutting in close and swinging wide we've actually poked into some spots we've never quite poked into.

We came around a corner and there was a skiboat hovering in a vaguely familiar pose. We came to all stop. There was a girl on the dock, single ski, standing up. It took three tries. We blew *Walkabout's* whistle and the guys in the boat waved. Nobody asked us if we wanted to try it.



We stopped off at Indian Creek. I spotted a really nice Ranger 20 on a trailer in the ramp lot. We went in and tied up a second time.



R-20's became a recurrent theme today underway continuing south. For a couple of days where almost nobody is out we've had some pretty interesting meetings with those few who are. Take this girl.



Her profile says “WWII personnel boat” all over it. I’ve seen her around over the years but I never got close enough to read the name. *Kaniksu* was the name of a Forest Service boat famous for her Priest Lake years. We couldn’t get close enough to hail the Skipper and he didn’t answer CH-16 calls.

Moving south we pulled into the Coolin dock complex and ordered lunch at the Tye Coffee Shop. A guy came over to ask about the whistle. Then a lady came over to remind him that they were supposed to be putting a boat on the trailer. OK, we were talking about other stuff by then. So I started talking to the lady and before you knew it we were talking about the R-20 she got for Mother’s Day. Now that’s a kid that I could come to like. Gave mom a boat! Then the guy came over to retrieve the lady. Back underway.

We passed a pretty cool invention. This rig had steps running up that snag. No batteries, no microchips. Awright, huh?



We pulled into the Kalispell Bay FS dock and spent a couple hours in the 30 minute “loading zone.” There was nobody around to give us a ticket, nobody around for anything else either. We pulled off a couple hundred feet and into a bight. Last night out. We’ll be riding the hook.



The Lonely Roads of Late September: Part Three

For just a fleeting moment I was a bit annoyed. We were rolling at anchor. Long past dark and I didn’t really want to try to move to a less lumpy location. Perfectly calm here when we anchored but the swells came rolling in from someplace else where the wind was obviously blowing.

I knew for a fact that we were the only ones anchored out here. Our bow hook was set in sand with no visible rocks or logs in a fathom and a half. I never actually measure such things, but on about a 6 to 1 scope. We’ve had a set of reciprocal lights that served as a range, near straight through the middle of our circle. A cloudburst is thrumming on the cabin top. *Hot Stuff*, the cabin heater is glowing softly and keeping us warm.

I’m sitting at a dedicated computer desk in a regular kitchen chair on a 17’ boat. Some folks go their entire lives and never spend even one night swinging around a Danforth or even a Bruce or CQR. I’ve been doing such eccentricity for at least 45 years. Sure, I get a dose of “things that go bump in the night,” but I also get my own little world.



What this is all about is trying to decide if little *Walkabout* is turning out acceptable. We have 750 miles on the sumlog since we launched in Olympia, the last couple days of June just three months ago. We’ll likely cover a thousand water miles this season. We were running up and down the river and Diamond Puddle and even Priest Lake well before Regular People figured it was warm enough for stuff like that, back when the last snows of May were turning to the first rains of May.

Mr Brogans has over 5,000 miles on his new axle, another June addition. Those 5K miles included a lot of roadside overnight stops. So at least until we start rolling a lot heavier, and until that leak right over my pil-

low gets to dribbling into my ear, I’d say that things are pretty fine right here. So far she does seem to be working out. Could be we are finally getting the formula close to right?

The Lonely Roads of Late September: Part Four

Jamie and I spent the night rolling and bobbing on a single hook. We probably could have just stayed at the FS dock but didn’t want to “break the rules” in a 30 minute zone. Doubt anybody even noticed. We had just come in and tied up to go ashore when a ranger lady pulled up and emptied the fee box. She waved and left. Hmnnn, maybe my normal attitude about playing by the rules wasn’t all that far off, huh?

About the same time a couple of codgers showed up with a most interesting little frankenboatish craft, an apparently factory stock itty bitty “skiboat” from the ‘50s complete with vestigial fins and molded in seating for four and an almost equally ancient Evinrude 40. This little blast from the past stopped growing when she reached 12’. She would have been born with one of those molded Plexiglas wraparound windshields. Anyhow, that’s all gone now and an ancient swivel chair sprouts from the foredeck.



Two guys came down from the parking lot and wedged themselves in. The skipper turned to me, pipe clenched in his teeth, and uttered, “just cruisin’, huh?” He hit the starter a few times until that magic balance between choke and throttle and mojo spun the ol’ ‘Rudie into action and they were gone. Good fishin’ guys.



Wonder how far out those old guys are planning to chase the lunkers? I could hear that distinctive “quiet Evinrude” buzz for about five miles off into the gloaming.



And the hits just keep coming! This was an ancient Luger, likely bought from an ad in *Popular Mechanics* as a kit boat. It was the same guy. The one retired from the Forest Service. He didn't know if *Kaniksu* was the same boat. I thought about offering to set the rig up for him but there's a bite to the wind today. Not such a great day for it.



It's getting cold and there's a new bite in the wind. We're only a couple hours out from the ramp but nobody's much interested in giving it up just yet. Underway for Kalispell Island. I think I can see a mast tied up alongside the campground/island host's boat. Wonder if it's the same guy we met a few weeks back?

That wind went from "bite" to "kick." A following sea is *Walkabout's* weakest suit when the deep bow and low power conspire to create a high yaw index. After we used up about all of our partial lee granted by hugging the western shoreline, I got the bright idea to run across the beam seas to the east side. The old timers called it "Cape Horn." Still that way on the chart and today I sorta get the point. But the biggest reason I was thinking "hidey hole" about the time our teapot took a complete back flip off the stove and landed on its feet was the flag hanging limp just inside CH.

So we traced along a chain of little rocky islands and found an anchorage at the mouth of a stream. Great place for cabins and docks in a southerly blow, at least. Depending upon developments, I figured we'd stay tucked up here for a bit. Looking a bit gnarly just back around the corner. Well, after watching the tree tops for an hour or so we thought Aeolis was taking a bit of a break so maybe it was time to run for it.



And next thing you know we were back on the trailer. As far as that mission we were on, we ran right at 56 1/2 miles to complete a circuit of this big ol' pond. More like a figure eight if we look at our track. A long way at 5 knots, quite a long way. OK, now this party's over.

I Guess It's a Wrap

Overnight our weathergods decided to shift from short pants and T-shirts to SNOW. But it's only SEPTEMBER! Our small fleet didn't even all get in the water this Voyaging Season. Well, actually, only two of the girls had to sit out The Season.

I've been scurrying around trying to find winter quarters for everybody. Good ol' *Alice* the 72-year-old herder of boats got fired up and was humming. *Miss Kathleen* and little *Punkin Seed* got tarped up and settled out in what Kate calls my "industrial area."



Lady Bug is over in The Slammer. She got a new winter cover and I promised that she'd be brought home sometime before the snow melts and get a facelift. She's already expressing an interest in participating in next summer's Salish 100 cattle drive. We still have to have a heart to heart about how much my knees want to stay bent up in a "floating fiberglass pup tent" for a week.

Yesterday, before the snow made its appearance, I got the New Girl out and built a gawdawful contraption waaaay up in the air to support a "snow shed" sorta thing. I'm just about certain the New Girl ain't never spent even a week outside in all her 50 years until now. It got down to *Walkabout*. Kate even asked me if we "were done for the year?" Well, er, maybe.



One More, One More Last Time

A couple of things were supposed to happen tonight. The moon was supposed to come up about the time it was supposed to get dark and our overnight temperature wasn't supposed to drop below freezing. So that's why we got here. Granted, we were already a third of the way through October but Jamie the Seadog and I made one more pilgrimage north. Check the forecast, ignore. Check the temperature, ignore. Hook up. Head out. Flip a coin, pick a destination, likely the last for this year.



That's pretty much how we got here. Anchored in a half fathom over a sand bottom. All the Rich Guy Houses are closed up, shades drawn, docks pulled up on the beach, boats hauled off to storage. Looks like we weren't paying attention to what everybody else knows. Whatever else we found a road less taken and the wind's coming up a bit.



Then right there! Didjaseit? A real one, see the planks 'n seams? She couldn't possibly be planning to spend the winter out here. Naw, no way.



Movin' north, just the four of us (*Walkabout*, Miss Suzi, Jamie and me). Getting a bit hazy. An afternoon dustup coming? About six weeks ago folks were still swimming here. Now what we've got is the State Park equivalent of "rolling the sidewalks up."



Time to pull that hook and stand out into the southerly. There's no denying the calendar. Anyhow, we've got a mission, a couple of 'em, yet this afternoon. We made a couple of more stops here and there. We really don't have any place we need to be getting to and we're not in much of a hurry either.

On the way out of our hideyhole at Lion's Head we made our normal stop to pay our respects to *Tyee*. Somehow her bones have withstood 65 years of ice and waves. Legend has it, after the highway got all the way up here in the '40s and log trucks could make the mill runs directly, the business of towing those enormous log booms to the outlet went out of fashion, the owners pulled all the machinery and set her ablaze. Instead of going stoically to a deep water demise, she drifted back ashore and there she still resides. The old deck and hatchways still meet with those massive ribs.



A quick salute and underway again. Our afternoon is advancing. When we showed up at Granite Creek it was quite deserted, save for a guy working on the ancient gas house. Turns out he's Matt, Melissa's brother. They are the heirs of the folks who built this place in the 1930s. How cool is that? He was taking pictures. He had to fly back home to California tomorrow. Poor sod. Jamie and I get to come to GC just about any time we care to. We sort of act like we own the place and the owners only get to come here a couple of times a year.



I told Matt about the Howl at the Moon cruises that have for five or six years been focused on watching the moonrise over Chimney Rock, across the lake. He responded, "There's a full moon tonight about six, so that's our mission, to be set up in the right spot and get a picture."

We went over to Elkins Resort to order dinner from the bar. There was a humungus wedding party filling the place up. One of the coolest things was this dock/barge complete with a gangplank.



By then it was getting time to find a vantage point for moonrise. Chimney Rock is only visible from a narrow arc along the western shore of the lake. We picked a spot that seemed about right. It got dark. It got cold. It got cloudy. And so the quest continues. One of these days we're gonna get that picture.





This small jewel was built and put in the water, sailed twice and put back alongside of the shed several months ago. Actually put there after I had taken him to the last Plywooden Boat Show over in Aransas Pass, here in Texas. Other pressing matters filled the brain. There were a few honey do's needed to be done, those do's are forever present. The projects filling the brain were other boat projects.

Not a bad thing really and the plate is still full. Two have been up for sale but they aren't moving, one of the two a second Widgeon. I'm glad hasn't sold. Kim still fussing with the first one, learning it, figuring it out, how best to sail it. One would think a 12' dinghy would hardly require all the thought. I can really complicate things.

So the one Widgeon is sailable, the insides reworked and looking very promising with a bad back. So the second Widgeon, not selling and ad expired, will be hanging around for a makeover of all that's found good on the first. Fingers crossed.

Sail material came for the *Ned*, I've been sewing, so out comes *Ned*. His turn. Good thing, too. Water had been sitting inside. My cover job wasn't such a good job after all. The inside being epoxied saved my little craft from a major rework. Which brings to mind, cheap material. I've cut corners in the past and using the cheap stuff, I've found, doesn't. I used lauan ply in the past wishing I never did.

The old adage, best work with best material, is the best way to go. I still don't follow that advice to the letter of the law. But it sounds good, and that's what I read. So do the best you can with the best you can buy, but when you don't and you won't always, no big deal. Enjoy the day.

At the last boat festival there in Aransas Pass, John Harris was there, plying his goods. Nice stuff. He designed *Ned*. Was very gracious, even sent me an email asking for feedback after I've sailed the *Ned* some more. Very gracious because I changed a few things, had some thoughts of my own. My *Ned* did not then, nor now, do the design justice, yet still Mr Harris was very pleasant about the whole thing. Gave some encouragement as to ballast, found we were both going in that direction.

I added Paradox chine runners to the design, have not yet added the designed leeboards, but plan on it. The chine runners did work though. I believe the addition of the leeboards, with the chine runners will com-

Meanderings Along the Coast of Texas

By Michael Beebe

pliment each other. Here on the Texas Coast I get in some pretty skinny water. Kept flat with chine runners, they still bit when the leeboards, because of the shallow depth, started losing their grip and consequently their designed ability. In deeper water the leeboards do what the runners don't, that is pointing ability. The best of boats worlds, eh? So in a few days, *Ned* and I are going sailing.

About Round Tops

If toolboxes, the big box kind, were made with half round tops it could be a Gensend to people like me. On the cover of *Fine Woodworking* years ago was a photo of a cabinetmaker gluing up a drawer on his table saw. In the background one could see his workbenches full of tools and glue bottles and other stuff laying all over on top. No wonder he needed the table saw. The inside story told how this fellow was making a desk for a sitting president. My kind of guy. I've never made anything for a president, past or present. I have, though, worked for a friend of one.

My job site toolbox was given to me by my brother. He was here recently, asked if I even knew anymore what was inside. He could tell it hadn't been opened in a while. Today it was. Inside was just what I remembered, mostly sails, keeping them safe from the mice. Looking at that mess on the toolbox, *Red Top* sitting outside, gave me the inspiration for a round top toolbox. Nothing would ever be placed on one again.

My *Red Top*, a Lehman 12 sailing dinghy, highly modified, has fore and aft turtleback decks. Called turtlebacks because of their round shape. I stumbled across the idea some time ago. My thought was it would help when capsized. Not really necessary, a 12 footer is easy enough to get back on its feet. The round top decks do give more storage and added bouncy, a good thing. On a toolbox I'm not sure what one would store in the newly created cavity. But an untold amount of things could never be placed on top.

The Next One

I've been rearranging the shop in anticipation of another rebuild. A Widgeon, an O'Day Widgeon, all 12' of her. With the rearranged shop, the Widgeon will fit inside giving me room to work out of the weather. Earlier this year the first Widgeon was the blank canvas. Very crude, one doesn't want to run one's hand along the surface, not without gloves.

Having sailed the first Widgeon as both a sloop as designed, as a lug and soon as a cat rig, and with the inside torn out I've found comfort for these old bones. The Widgeon is a good sailer, planes readily, handles the higher 20s with aplomb. But as designed she is a wet boat. In the summer that's not a problem, come winter it will be. I've got some ideas I think will work.

I wouldn't advise doing what I do though, not many buyers out there share my thoughts when it comes time to sell and move on. I've had to swallow a time or two at the dump, education is always expensive but at least the banks won't loan me any money.

The whole boat is the same size as a 30 footer's cockpit, or something like that. One of Phil Bolger's designs was like that, I think he even was quoted as saying something to that affect, or would that be effect? I've told people when I'm sailing my *Red Top*, all 12' of her, I don't need the other 10'-20' up ahead. That sounds as if it was a bit thoughtful in the making. And it is, but only so long as the owner is satisfied sailing a 12 footer.

When the itch comes, so does the rationale that accompanies the getting of another sailing craft, if even the same size, larger or even shorter. Being the honest folk that we are, there's no denying this line of thought. After all, it's one leg at a time putting on the pants. Something we all do.

After getting beyond this spell of rationalization we can get on to the purchase of our next true love. I was, and still might, name my next sailing dinghy *The Next One*, but a name you'll never see on any of my girls would be *The Last One*. I think you'll have to agree with me here.

I was asked once if I had kept track of the girls I dated, the floating ones, keeping track of the two footed kind could be done with both my hands, maybe even one, I was never very popular. The good lookers who sported a mast, I'd have to borrow a few other hands and some feet to do the counting. I've not lost count, just not saying.

When I see a good looking sailing dinghy, I wonder how she'll sail. I'm beginning to see just how hopeless my situation is. Admitting it wasn't the hard part, nor the justification of owning the six daydreams that grace my backyard costing less than my neighbor's outdoor alone, explaining to a non sailing wife, now that takes some creative thinking.

My brother-in-law used to kid me about the number of sailboats out back. Throwing the ball back into his court once, I asked how many rifles and shotguns he owned. My brother's wife asked him how many fishing poles he needed as he was picking up a couple more at a garage sale. "Grandkid," he told her. He may need a few more wives, what with the amount of fishing poles in his garage.

But that's OK, the shotguns, fishing poles and sailing dinghy's help us old codgers grow older gracefully.

Yesterday

Yesterday and today seemed one and the same. My little *Red Top* has been on the hard over at my work area for several months now, waiting patiently for work to progress on her. Her foredeck needed replacing and I should have known better when guessing the curve of the turtle back, I had the bulkhead position correct, the rest, however, would need clamps to bring the sides down.

Long story short, it didn't work. In the process I sprung the sheer clamp loose and its top member which held the foredeck in its radius where it met the sheer. I was creating more work as I went. Frustrated and sitting down in the doorway of the shop I'm thinking, "I'll just give it away." Instead, I went sailing yesterday afternoon. Today the same *Red Top* awaits but somehow she looks a bit different, not so demanding. Maybe it's me.

Today I decided to take the Potter out for a sail, my intentions were a photo shoot to help sell the thing. The wind was kicking up a bit so I raised only the main. Should have put in the only reef, although I didn't. I was only going across to the island from the har-

bor and the jib was left in the cabin. It was a bit more wind than I first realized. Getting to the island and tossing the anchor over, when dropping the main I find the anchor is dragging. My thought was to anchor and step into the water to get a photo from shore.

Well now I'm dragging anchor and hurriedly pulling the anchor in, it's a ball of mud. The mud falls off and another attempt and another drag. Bummer. I'm now almost mid channel and this time it has got to work. Barges and tugs are downwind off to the side, I'm thinking I'll miss them if I keep drifting.

The main is lying in the cockpit not being any help. I check both directions for barge traffic, seeing it's clear for now. Pull the anchor back in, shake off the mud again and toss it off the bow. Pulling gently on the rode as if I'm playing a fish the anchor grabs and holds. I'm now past mid channel and the drift may or may not have given me room to clear the commercial side of the entrance.

Being on a good hook, I set the mainsail and raised it. Then pulling the anchor rode in a few feet so I can finish hauling in from the cockpit, thereby giving time to drop the centerboard and rudder blade and sheet in the main before the slab sided steel barge greets me.

A wind gust catches the sail and I thought we were going over. I notice the rigging is whistling now, telling me it's now above 20. Pulling in the anchor from the port side, the rode and soon enough, its chain is across the bow with the anchor hanging off the starboard bow. I secured the rode to the port railing backrest with the Danforth hanging there over the side, I'm once again sailing. The barge was about 25' off the starboard beam. This time I'm getting to the island and sailing into the salt grass, using the centerboard to hold the bow in the weeds, raising the rudder blade and considering the situation.

I know below me is shoe eating mud, the heck with it. Up centerboard and the SE winds soon blows us away from the island. Laughing to myself, "That didn't work!"

Thinking I'll get the photos at the dock I see a fisherman there on his boat waiting for his buddy. Docks being on both sides of the ramp. I glided in just off his port bow, swung the Potter around and stepped off onto the opposite dock easy as can be, drawing a compliment from the fisherman.

Another laugh on my part. "You should have seen me just now out in the channel! I drug anchor three time and almost capsized." We talked a bit and he offered his help and took the stern line. As I was lowering the mast a boat engine mechanic I hadn't seen for a while drove by waving hello and said, "How you doing Cap'tn?" Another laugh, if he only knew.

Bob 'n Larry

Bob 'n Larry are coming. When New York City is covered in snow, the lawyer of the two can still work, if but only somewhat. Being a representative of the working class, when the streets fill with snow, cases are often postponed. I'm not sure just where the cut off is measured, whether in inches or feet. I would think feet.

The plumber of our pair doesn't much care for the white stuff himself. Never had, truth be told. Getting on in years, it doesn't take much of an arm twisting by his buddy the lawyer to get on a plane and fly down here to Corpus Christie. More like a simple phone call following a few email photos sent of trips from years past when the streets filled with snow.

Being the dinghy sailors that they are, beach cruising/camping, these two are inseparable both as a team and the cruising/camping part as well. Their childhood adventures on the water have stretched many years. The pair are the first I'd ever met personally that shipped their dinghies to the Bahamas. Others have done it, I've just never met them.

A few years back I received a call from one of them, can't remember which, the lawyer or the plumber. They wanted to rent a couple of beach cruising dinghies from me.

A friendship started of sorts and they'd come back several years in a row. I guess the

logistics of sending off their favorite sailing dinghy loaded with personal effects was getting a bit complicated, and then never knowing if any equipment might have grown legs along the way was getting to be a bummer.

So Corpus it was. I'm glad they came. If memory serves me well, which usually it does not, most of their trips here were uneventful. Except for the times when they were. That list seems to be growing actually.

Capsized together, the both of them, in separated dinghies in the wake of a passing oil tanker. They should have known better, at least that's what they said later, after the fact. Their previous experience of a long history of sailing these dinghies served them well in their recovery, averting disaster.

Another memory comes to mind of their exploits while sailing the Texas shallows. A memory stated in one simple sentence a few years back gives an idea of what went on. "Where's the matches?" I forget who it was that asked the question, the plumber or the lawyer. Their discomfort didn't last all that long. They backtracked to the waterside bait stand they passed leaving the put in spot, getting a couple of Bic lighters. They only ate two cold meals, dinner and breakfast. No hot coffee in the morning was the real problem.

More memories flow now that these have started, memories enough to fill a small book. Enjoyable, funny reads, taking the reader back out upon the waters of past trips shared with good friends, shared with newbie cruisers and their children. Good times to be had and hopefully many more to come.

I expect to be hearing from one or the other or even both soon enough telling me when their flight comes in to Corpus. The times, which is most times, when I hear from both on the same day are to firm up the plans for their next adventure. They get so excited, just like little kids and just like young ones with more than enough years behind them, they want to make sure the other one won't forget the matches this next time. It should be nice.



Gray Fleet

Austal USA filed grievances against Huntington Ingalls shipyards regarding a bid to fix, repair or update the LCS ships. Obviously this is a massive deal since the LCS "Oh Make My Dreams Come True" ships have proven to be as disastrous as predicted by the late Sen John McCain. The GAO denied the complaint for sundry economical and political reasons, but Huntington Ingalls built the ships, they probably have some idea of what is not working. Or so I'd like to believe.

The Navy is again complaining about the backlog of ships needing service and repair while Congress and the White House are trying to build even more vessels. Currently 45 West Coast warships are awaiting the use of four dry docks. RADM Tom Anderson stated that another 100 ships are scheduled for service.

One facet of the problem is the obvious lack of facilities. Another issue is the lack of planning time and data collection before the ships require service or repair. Of course, the biggest problem is simply the way Big Business and the Defense Department do business. They both run on "Just In Time" operations so that neither has large stockpiles of materiel/inventory. This method is fiscally acceptable but it too often holds up repairs when a part is delayed.

We can have all the ships in the world but if we can't repair or service or supply them, numbers do not mean a thing. What's that old bromide, "For the want of a nail..."? DUH!

Destroyers are the backbone of any Navy, the workhorses that carry supplies, provide anti air cover, keep carriers safe from submarines, etc. They are the infantry of the fleet. The most abundant are the *Arleigh Burke* (DDG-51) class destroyers and the Navy wants three more ASAP. The US Canoe Club requested approximately \$6 billion to build three.

The sister ships to the *Arleigh Burke* are the *Zumwalt* (DD-1000) class that are more expensive, have greater abilities, able to accomplish more missions and are stealthy. They cost a lot more.

Paul Dull wrote about the Imperial Japanese Navy 1941-1945. Using WWII Japanese records, Professor Dull proffered data explaining that Japan lost its advantage with the sinking of her destroyers. During the five month Guadalcanal battles on land and sea, Japan lost a potload of destroyers to the point it could no longer provide cover for her carriers, battleships or cruisers. Worse, they could not provide minimum supplies or reinforcements for their troops on the island. With the loss of Guadalcanal, all of Japan's war aims were lost. After Guadalcanal, Japan could not win the war. Dull articulated a great point stating that wars have a propensity for continuing long after the war is lost. (FYI: Dull cites every Japanese warship in WWII. Few survived to the end.)

Whine, rant, complain, explain, etc, but it makes little sense to continue to beat your head against the wall. Congress, a well known entity where we send mentally challenged but great haired folks, seems hell bent on building a larger Navy that should include the fabulous LCS ships, destroyers and other ships that would have made great fighters in World War II. Meanwhile, the Navy, the creature that actually has to do the fighting at sea, continues their complaint that they need cargo ships, oilers and transports.

For the second straight month high-rank-



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

ing officers and officials have bombarded the public with their concerns. Get this, even the Army joined their rivals in this concern. They noted that they couldn't even think about overseas fighting for a minimum of a month because the US cannot supply equipment in a timely manner. Army cites the ongoing logistics problem in the Middle East, the failure of hauling necessary equipment in Desert Storm and their deepening worries about the Navy's ability to assist them in anything else but launching cruise missiles.

As President of the Iowa Council of the Navy League, a member of the US Naval Institute and an author of naval history, I have difficulty remembering such intense concerns about our ability to protect and defend US interests coming up from the Supply Corps. I do know that Desert Storm cost hundreds of millions of dollars "renting" planes and ships to carry our supplies because the military couldn't do it. Big Business loved that war.

Merchant Fleet

The *Aries Leader*, owned by NYK, made the first carbon neutral voyage by a cargo ship (other than sailing ships). NYK used the latest carbon reducing technology and offset 5,000 tons of carbon.

The Master of the bulker *Unison Medal* was accidentally killed when he left his cabin to inspect a parted line. A second line parted and the snapback killed him. The ship was being loaded with copper concentrate at Ilo, Peru. An Australian Maritime Safety Authority study claimed that mooring line accidents occur over 200 times per year.

A fire onboard the Ro-Ro *Golden Ray* caused the ship to list heavily so the pilot took the ship out of the channel and intentionally grounded her. Coast Guard rescued the entire crew but four were trapped in the engine compartment and it took over 30 hours to reach them. The ship was carrying Kia and Hyundai cars manufactured in South America and bound for the Middle East. Now the major concern is leaking fuel.

Sand boils are a consistent seepage and erosion problem for the Army Corps of Engineers who have had no effective means of eliminating them. Most people know sand boils as quicksand, they are actually liquefied sediment (sand). Two hydro mechanical scientists have patented a devise that effectively eliminates quicksand.

Their invention is a conical mesh that is inserted into the boil whereupon the cone opens allowing water to rise but not the sand. Basically it is a virtual umbrella made of mesh with heavy metallic ribs. The inverted closed umbrella is stuck into the boil and then the mechanism is opened. The water can come up through the mesh but sand cannot. Really cool and simple.

Happy Birthday and congratulations to Bullard, the marine safety company, on the 100th anniversary of the Hard Hat! The Cyn-

thiana, Kentucky, company is 121 years old and has been owned by the same family for all 121 years. They also make respirators, fire safety equipment and face shields.

French authorities are calling off the search for survivors of the *Bourbon Rhode* that took on water in a Force 4 hurricane 1200nm from Martinique. Cross, the French version of a search and rescue unit, picked up three survivors and four bodies, however, seven crew remain missing.

The *Maritime Executive's* OP-ED page robustly complained about the lack of safety mandates and concerns in the Arctic noting that the last comprehensive law was the 1990 Oil Pollution Act (OPA) that was passed after the *Exxon Valdez* disaster. This act, in essence, states that the polluter pays for damages of oil spills.

2018 was the warmest summer on record in the Arctic and had the least amount of ice known. Transportation in the Arctic is becoming big business and serious regulations need to be in place for the future. Already Russia and Canada are in a nose to nose shouting match about the former country's ships off the northern coast of the latter. Over 10,000 ships have transited the Arctic regions and the potential for damage to the fragile environment is enormous. Worse, under OPA 90 the US left it up to the merchant business to handle problems. Lacking guidelines, specific requirements, facilities and equipment for pollution and accidents, the Arctic has been ignored by Congress too long.

Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi by William Peterson is considered the encyclopedia of everything we need to know about steamboating on the Upper Mississippi. It was originally written in the 1960s and published by the Iowa Historical Society and sent free to members. I, of course, lost my copy so I had to recently purchase a used paperback version. Not particularly well written and not politically correct 60 years later, the book does offer a wonderful picture of the migration of people westward from 1830 to about 1880.

Heading north from St Louis was very difficult because of the Lower Rapids at the mouth of the Des Moines River and the Upper Rapids around Rock Island, Illinois, but once they were able to ford the shallows, millions entered the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa Territories where land was cheap and dreams were at hand.

So much history exists along the river. Prairie du Chien (Wisconsin) existed before the US. It was the first point east for fur trappers. Fort Crawford was established there and it became the center for all things between plain Indians and white settlers. Lt Robert E. Lee oversaw the landings of the steamboats. Colonel Zachary Taylor (eventual President) was deeply troubled by a young Lt Jefferson Davis who was deeply in love with his commanding officer's daughter. Taylor sent him across the river to establish a mill and scout the Yellow River to keep him away from his daughter. To no avail, the daughter ran off and married the southerner. Of course, her husband later became President of the Confederate States in the Civil War.

Emigrants from Germany, Norway and Ireland poured into the region creating cities, colleges, business empires and homesteads in an instant. Life was incredibly difficult. The boat trip upriver was fraught with hucksters, disease, lack of decent water and food and even a place to sleep. Peterson's book

cites facts and figures as well as a true picture of life aboard the steamboats. My ancestors took that route to settle in Allamakee County (once seen as potentially the business center of Iowa. It now has only about 15,000 people). Find a copy at used bookstores.

White Fleet

Princess Cruise Lines rolled out another of their ships at the Fincantieri Shipyards in Italy. The *Enchanted Princess*, at 143,000 tons, can carry about 3,600 passengers and was welcomed by Doris Magsaysay Ho, the CEO of Magsaysay HO Enterprises that trains people for work on cruise ships. Ms Ho, whose company is in the Philippines, noted that over 7,000 of her trained people work aboard cruise ships.

Once again Mother Nature forced cruise companies to alter their itineraries. Tropical Storm Karen headed toward Puerto Rico (as if they needed any further damage) and the American Virgin Islands. *Carnival Fascination* did not stop at St Thomas and hit St Maarten a day earlier than scheduled as well as altering a stop at Dominica. Royal Caribbean announced that all their ships would change schedules to avoid the storm. Whiners will be tossed overboard.

The Bahamas suffered catastrophic damage in the recent batch of hurricanes but the government did induce Carnival Cruise Lines and Holland America to build new port developments at Grand Bahama and Little San Salvador. The Grand Bahama project will cost approximately \$100 million and the Little San Salvador will cost \$80 million. Since tourism is the primary income for the nation, added port facilities are necessary. The Bahamian Government noted that while Hurricane Dorian created incredible damage, it did not impact several islands and tourism is still open for business.

Ritz-Carlton figured that if they could run hotels, why not run cruise liners. Their foray into the seagoing business hit a major snag when production of their ship created monstrous delays and costs with Spanish shipbuilder Hijos de J. Barreras. Cruise ships are extremely complex, expensive and dependent on a plethora of suppliers. Mitsubishi lost over \$2 billion trying to build cruise ships before they simply closed shop.

Celebrity Summit was ready to get underway when two crewmen jumped overboard. The first was spotted at 0540 and rescued by Quebec's Port Security Patrol. The second was picked up two and a half miles away at 0700. Both were wearing life jackets. The water temperature was 55° and survival is impossible after two to four hours of immersion. Exactly why these men went overboard is unclear.

Environment

Japan's Minister, Yoshiaki Harada, announced that the country is planning on dumping a million tons of nuclear contaminated water from the Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) Fukushima nuclear power plant that was severely damaged in a 2011 tsunami. Currently stored in hundreds of tanks, the water contains extraordinarily high toxic levels of tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen and other radioactive isotopes of strontium, iodine, rhodium and cobalt.

Japan's fishermen angrily denounced the plan, noting that fish and sea life will be contaminated to unlawful levels and will destroy their livelihood. South Korea voiced its deep

rage over the proposal for similar reasons. Seoul summoned the Japanese Ambassador to issue formal concerns and demand inclusion in planning on nuclear dispersal.

Studies in Japan state that it would take a minimum of 17 years for Japan to dilute the waste to legal limits. German Greenpeace nuclear specialists claim that Japan must continue to contain the nuclear waste and eliminate the tritium.

Japan says the cost of continued storage supervision, maintenance and the increase in polluted water levels make it impossible to continue beyond 2022. They can pay for it now or they can pay for it later.

One of the most controversial legislative acts of the last 50 years is Waters of the United States (WOTUS) that was originally passed in 1972 (Nixon administration) in which the Federal government tried to obtain authority over a muddle of insufficient or contradictory state laws regarding rivers, wetlands and pollution. Even this failed to define what waters this concerned. The 2015 Clean Water Act (Obama administration) attempted to clarify, define and even exclude specific entities such as farmers from regulation. In the past, courts have been jammed with case by case legal wrangling. The Clean Water Act tried to develop more universal understandings.

The elephant in the room is pollution. The Obama administration exerted great energy into cleaning up contaminated water, especially water used by low income families and cities with high populations of people of color.

The previous administration (Bush II) used the Supreme Court ruling that said certain waterways (in this case, a quarry that occasionally fills with water) were outside of Federal mandates. The President attempted to mandate severe restrictions but was defeated by Congress.

The Trump administration strongly desires to repeal the WOTUS act and the GOP, in general, supports that political move. Farm chemical companies, Farm Bureau, states rights supporters and other wealthy companies (Lockheed-Martin, 3M, JP Morgan Chase and Dow Chemical) have endowed huge amounts into the coffers of the Republicans to repeal WOTUS and the Clean Water Act.

The companies advocating repeal fear costly responsibilities or loss of business. Many people maintain that the Federal government is too invasive in their lives. Farmers do not wish to reduce crop production because of limits on pesticides, insecticides, fungicides and fertilizers.

The proponents of WOTUS and CWA argue that the government is discriminating against people of color and the impoverished. Urban leaders are frustrated that upstream pollution costs their constituency money to clean up rural chemicals. Environmentalists posit that American waters are endangered by greedy Big Businesses which are only interested in immediate profits.

This particular political hot potato will be a prime fight during the 2020 elections with tons of money flowing to political parties. Unfortunately both sides offer solid, rational and defensible arguments. Equally unfortunate, both sides will generate a tremendous amount of blarney, BS and hysteria.

Boating

Boating magazine had a really important article about hauling your boat on a trailer.

Personally, I put new tires on my trailer several years ago but discovered that they were down to the wires within 200 miles due to a bent axle of which I was unaware. Four hundred dollars fixed the axle but it cost me an additional round trip to Lake Pepin.

BoatsUS noted that 77% of their emergency calls were about flat tires, wheel bearing failure and axle breakage. They listed tools that should be carried each and every time you travel with your boat. Before traveling, make sure you have tools and equipment for handling a breakdown.

Pre Season Checklist

- *Check wheel bearings
- *Check alignment
- *Join BoatUS, AAA or Sam's Club Road Assistance

Pre Travel Checklist

- *Check tire pressure
- *Check tire treads
- *Check for bulges, cracks, or other deformed concerns

Emergency Tool List

- *Spare tire
- *Boat trailer jack
- *Small jack stand
- *Wheel chocks
- *Lug wrench (I prefer a torque wrench and a deep socket matching the lug nuts)
- *12volt air compressor and tire pressure gauge
- *Hammer and small block of wood (if the trailer is equipped with Bearing Buddy protectors to aid in removal and installation)
- *A set of wheel bearings (even if you have someone else replace your failed wheel bearings, having the right set of bearings with you is an advantage)
- *Bearing grease
- *Bearing/spindle nut socket extension and ratchet (or large slip joint pliers)
- *Needle nose pliers (for pulling a cotter pin)
- *New cotter pin
- *Roll of paper towels or rags and plastic bag for disposal
- *Hand cleaner
- *Flashlight or, better yet, a headlamp
- *Safety equipment

Boating magazine featured a story about rogue waves that weren't supposed to exist, according to scientists, until modern technology proved what sailors have been saying for eons. The author defined rogue waves as twice the size of the rest of the waves in the vicinity.

If one is heading toward you, take it on headfirst. Even a slight angle might roll your vessel. If taking one from the beam, come about immediately and head for the "shoulders," the smallest part of the wave. If one comes from astern, maintain your engine throttle. Unfortunately he said nothing about taking an astern wave in a sailboat. Maybe he left unsaid, "Bend over and kiss your transom goodbye."

Point Nemo, in the South Pacific, is a place where the closest land is over 2,700 miles away. This means that at a specific time the closest people are aboard the International Space Station!



The Aft Cabin Hull Liner

To save weight, the aft cabin's hull liner is 9mm okoume. It will be strategically supported by cedar beams from below. The liner will be painted white and secured with brass strips.



The Building of *Helge*

A George Buehler Diesel Duck

Part 4

Wendell Gallagher is building a Buehler Diesel Duck 38. He had the steel hull built at a yard and trucked to his home and is doing the rest himself.

Mounting the Head

I mounted *Helge's* head atop the sloping hull liner. I did this by making a pedestal that compensates for the slant (my friend Marek has affectionately dubbed it the poodestal).

Both the pedestal and its lower support piece are constructed from leftover rudder stock. The lower support is glued to the hull. The sandwiching effect of the pedestal, hull liner and lower support makes for a very sturdy mount.



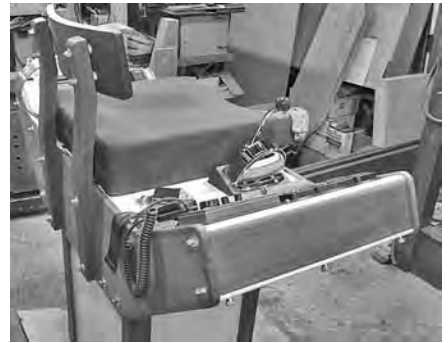
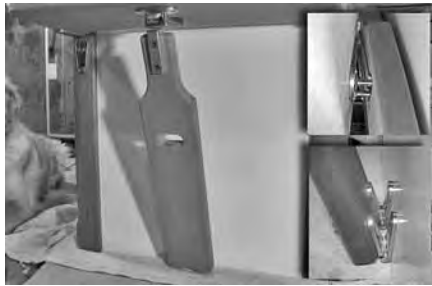
Building the Helm Chair

Helge's console area has limited space. Because of this, I built a helm chair to house the controls and gauges. They include the John Deere's instruments, the autopilot, the forward looking depth sounder, the throttle/transmission lever, the VHS radio, the bow thruster, the automatic fire extinguisher status light and manual pull, the remote battery and auto charging relay switches and the emergency bilge pump panel.

By placing these items on the chair, *Helge's* console will be clutter free and contain only the 6" ComNav compass and the navigation display above.

The chair's interior houses the bow thruster relays, the iMax router, the emergency bilge pump alarm, the autopilot's processor and the engine expansion tank (John Deere permits a non pressurized cooling system if the expansion tank is maintained two feet above the engine, the only way to accomplish this is to mount the tank in the wheelhouse).





The Life Preserver Locker
Helge's life preserver locker is mounted in the wheelhouse. Its lid is directly attached to the aft bulkhead and held open by an antique table leaf support. The front panels are free floating





I've had great success using Daly's Sea-Fin Ship'n Shore wood sealer. The satin finish and ease of application is wonderful.

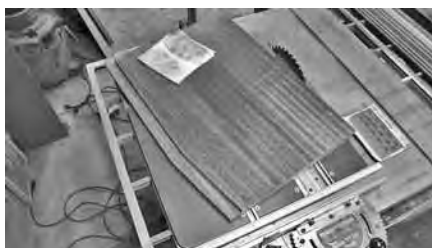
I brush on a very wet first coat followed by a bronze wool buffing to remove any shiny bleed back spots, I then rag wipe on two more thin coats.



The Medicine Chest

The medicine chest sides and shelves are 1/2" African ribbon stripe. The sliding doors are ribbon stripe plywood. The finger pulls are maple and the guides brass.

The sliding doors have magnets installed to assist in keeping them shut. The magnets are positioned where the doors overlap.



The Washbasin

The frame and shelves are solid mahogany. The front panel is ribbon stripe plywood and the back panel is cherry. The washbasin cabinet also houses the Groco holding tank. The tank is held in place with ratcheting tie down straps and extra coarse grit tape. The grit tape bites into the polyethylene tank bottom for a nice secure fit. The tank's macerator pump switch is protected by key to prevent unauthorized or mistaken discharge.

When I reach the plumbing stage, holes will be cut in the back panel to accommodate all the hoses. The stainless sink is nice and deep to meet the needs of the occasional hair washer.





Camera angles make the head discharge appear lower than the holding tank inlet. It is, in fact, above.



Norumbega Project Report

By Steve Lapey

The new Chapter project got off to a good start on August 24 as volunteers Bob Bundy, Doug Deyoe, John Fiske, Lawton Gaines, Steve Hodge, Paul Kelly, Jeff Morrill and Greg O'Brien all came to the canoe shop to help.

The seats and thwarts and outwales were removed, new temporary thwarts were installed inside the shop, then we moved outside to strip the old varnish from the interior. It was the perfect day for stripping varnish, not too hot with a light breeze to keep a flow of fresh air to replace the awful fumes from the varnish remover.

On August 31 we milled out the mahogany for the new gunwales and cedar for the new ribs, 13 of them.



On September 7 we removed the top row of planking in preparation for installing the new inwales, ripped, planed and tapered the mahogany inwales and had time leftover to re saw a piece of mahogany for the new decks.

On September 14 we got one of the new inwales in place and the second one steam bent and ready for installation at our next meeting, scheduled for October 5. Here is the Old Town with one new inwale. It's looking better already!



Sometimes I know something that I've known for years, and then there I am puzzling and mulling over something the answer to which is that thing I've known for years, but I'm just not connecting the dots. Part of this, of course, was probably due to my lack of experience in using the device I'd selected, i.e., hose clamps.

I was trying to figure out which was the right size of hose clamp to use for connecting the lateral frames to the longitudinal frames. At first I figured having more than I need is better than having not enough, so I bought one with a maximum diameter of 4" and one with a maximum diameter of 4 1/2". Those took a lot of winding but, after I got them on there and tightened up, I liked the rigidity I attained. The next thing was to figure out how to avoid having to do all that cranking. "And why," I was asking myself, "is this not fitting at least approximately the way that I thought it would?"

First, I put together a twiggie to gather empirical information about the dimensions of the pieces I was using by taping some of the pieces together with Gorilla Tape similarly to the way the longitudinal frames and the experimental lateral frame piece go together, like this:



Then I measured them. They measured 2 1/2". Wait. What? Well, all this time there was this member of my mental data team, so to speak, who had been waving a piece of 2x4 at me and saying, "A 2x4 isn't! A 2x4 isn't!" Of course. Two by fours used to actually measure 2"x4". Now, as we all know (but apparently some of us have, at least momentarily from time to time, forgotten) they don't.

So I went back to the hardware store and obtained one 2" and one 2 1/2" max diameter hose clamps. The 2 1/2" works pretty well, the 2" is, as would be expected, too small, but I wanted one just in case, since this is all, at this point, experimental and empirical meaning, basically, try it out and see what happens.

One of the guys at church has suggested zip ties, but those might be more in the realm of things I would carry along in case of emergencies (although come to think of it, if I get really, really close to being able to do a test, I might try those).

Meanwhile, the frames: Here are the basic frames, shown here in the next step up from the stage of three dimensional rough sketches. At this point they are cut and assembled with Gorilla Tape so that I can see how well they're working so far. By "basic" I mean just the rectangular frames without the triangles I rough sketched in Part XXXI. The top photo is the one with the triangles, a rough sketch which I "erased" (i.e., disassembled) and the one below it is the above-mentioned basic.

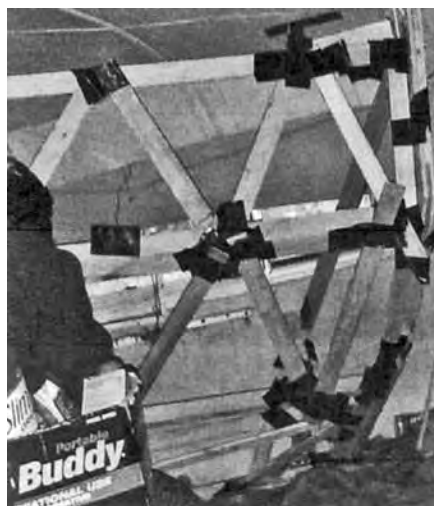
OK, so now it's time to really include the triangles. Actually, the rigidity I'm getting from just the rectangles is really good

Dancing Chicken

A Mini Saga in (?) Parts

Part XXXII

Copyright © Gloria Sadler Burge



(better than I expected) but then there's also that factor from Part XXX. "Another concern I've had for a while was whether, when one stepped into the boat from, say, a float, the bottom skin would support one's weight securely. I think that with the new frames, and then with an inner layer of coroplast, it probably should (I've been developing methods of doing dry run testing for these factors)."

"The new frames" to which I was referring at that time were the ones with the triangles, which I had just designed at that point. So next, I needed more twiggling to figure out just how the triangles would be constructed. I liked the way the frames looked in the rough sketch in general, but obviously I needed a method of actually constructing them. Glancing around at my various resources, I noticed a flyer that had arrived in the mail, which had been printed on lightweight cardboard. Aha. So here is a picture of the twiggie which I came up with next:



From this, I found out that there are several ways that it could be done and I wish I had time to try all of them because they all look interesting. However, since I want *Dancing Chicken* to be able to go play in the

water lots sooner than she would if I did that, I selected just one of them. This one is pretty much identical to the method I used on the longitudinal frames, which has the advantage of being one with which I am at least somewhat familiar by this time. Here is *Dancing Chicken* getting fitted for her triangles:



I'm starting with the bow member because that way I can adjust the angles and then follow suit with the rest of the frames, working aft toward the midships juncture point. That way, hopefully, I can get all the frames to go together into the pattern I "rough sketched" for the triangles. Meanwhile I'm hoping that these new modifications will contribute to helping *Dancing Chicken* become the rugged and able little craft I originally envisioned her to be.

I remember the concerns I voiced back in Part XXV: "If I continue on with this design as is (and postulating that I will indeed come up with a satisfactory joining scheme that will keep her safely intact while underway) will she ever be more than a pool toy? I want her to be a cruising dinghy."

So, with some of the various factors of which I have providentially become aware, and with the new "puzzle pieces" with which she will now be equipped, I figure maybe she'll be able to do that. We shall see.

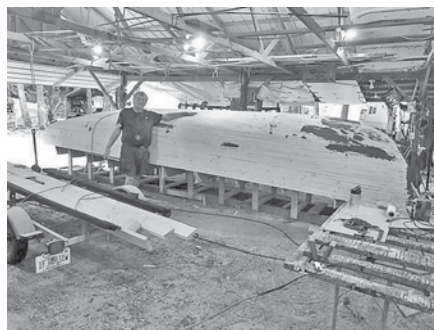
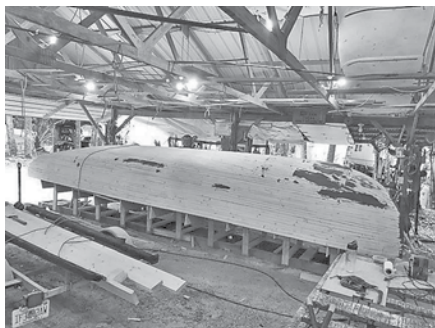


From the Tiki Hut

By Dave Lucas

Gotta Like That Grinding and...

I may be the only guy in the world who loves to grind and sand to see the shape that comes out. I can't wait to get out and get back to grinding again. Now to start filling and more sanding then on to glassing. Jim took these pictures of me doing what I love best. The woods out behind the boat look like a snow storm.



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The Construction of Wooden Lifeboats

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*,
Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

THIS PIECE SHOULD HAVE IMMEDIATE APPEAL for those of us who set to with saw and chisel to work in wood, either to build a boat of our own, repair one we have damaged, or, should we be loath to risk working on something so deserving of care, make shelves for the kitchen. The toughness of the old lifeboats is legendary, but it is almost impossible in the 21st century to discover how they were built and what woods were used. There is an aura of mystery about them, so I hope this will have a broader appeal among our readers than just those who are 'hands-on'.

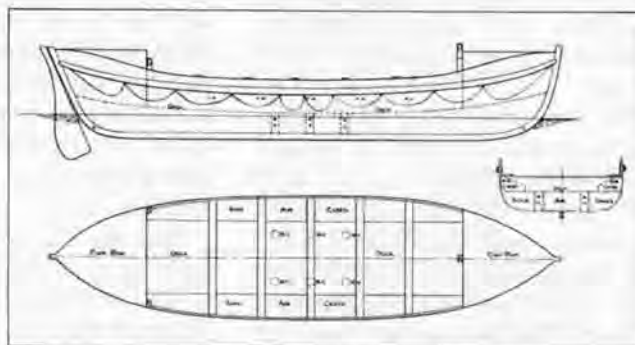
The text was lifted straight from a book titled 'Modern Motor-Lifeboats' written in 1933, by JR Barnett, OBE, M.Inst.N.A., Consulting Naval Architect to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution at that time; in other words, he held the position that had been George Lennox Watson's as from the year after the 1886 disaster, when the RNLI sought him out.

There were still many wooden pulling boats in service in 1933 (The *George Henry Ashley*, on which I am a crewman, had been retired from service only the year before, having gone on station in 1907), but as Barnett points out, there had been a return to diagonally-planked wooden hulls for powered LBs too, after the RNLI had

experimented with steel-hulled, steam-driven boats. They became disillusioned with steel hulls at about the same time as the internal combustion engine rendered steam obsolete as a powerplant in lifeboats. An example of the service's attitude to steam was *The Duke of Northumberland*, a steam lifeboat built in 1888 and, being an innovation, tried out in various localities before settling in Holyhead, Anglesey. She had a coal-fired horizontal steam engine driving a pump that drew in water through gratings on the boat's bottom and discharged it through pipes just above the turn of the bilge – 'hydraulic propulsion'. Two pipes faced aft for going ahead and two faced forward for reversing. Her crew liked her well enough and she saved hundreds of lives in a career that lasted until 1922, though she scalded to death two crewmen in the engine room on a trip back from Birkenhead after a refit. Perhaps significantly, a sailing lifeboat was introduced to keep her company at Holyhead until 1917, when perhaps the station was more certain she could be trusted. The coast from Holyhead round Carmel Head and the north coast of Anglesey was therefore 'over-lifeboated' for many years, so the *Charles Henry Ashley* in Cemaes Bay was rarely called upon: a disappointment to her crews, but possibly why she was so long-lived –Ed

ALL THE LIFEBOATS ON OUR COAST are at present built of wood. The Steam lifeboats which the Institution had on service many years ago were of steel; but since then steel construction has been abandoned. After much experience, the conclusion arrived at is that a well built boat with double-skin diagonal planking will come through the severe trials a lifeboat is called on to undergo better than a steel boat. The steel plating is comparatively thin and even when galvanized it is liable sooner or later to corrosion. Not only may it get ripped on rocks, but the riveting is apt to give out if she is pounded on sandbanks, as often occurs. The double-skin is more yielding under such conditions, and notwithstanding their hard work, these wood-built lifeboats last in good condition for many years—twenty-five years or more is quite usual*.

The wood keel and apron, or hog, are of large scantling (*dimensions for structural parts in boat-building*), and until recent years were of Canadian rock-elm, very often wrought out of one piece. But there is now great difficulty in obtaining that timber in large sizes, so it is necessary to use teak instead for the large boats. Below the wood keel there is a heavy cast-iron keel, extending for half the length of the boat.



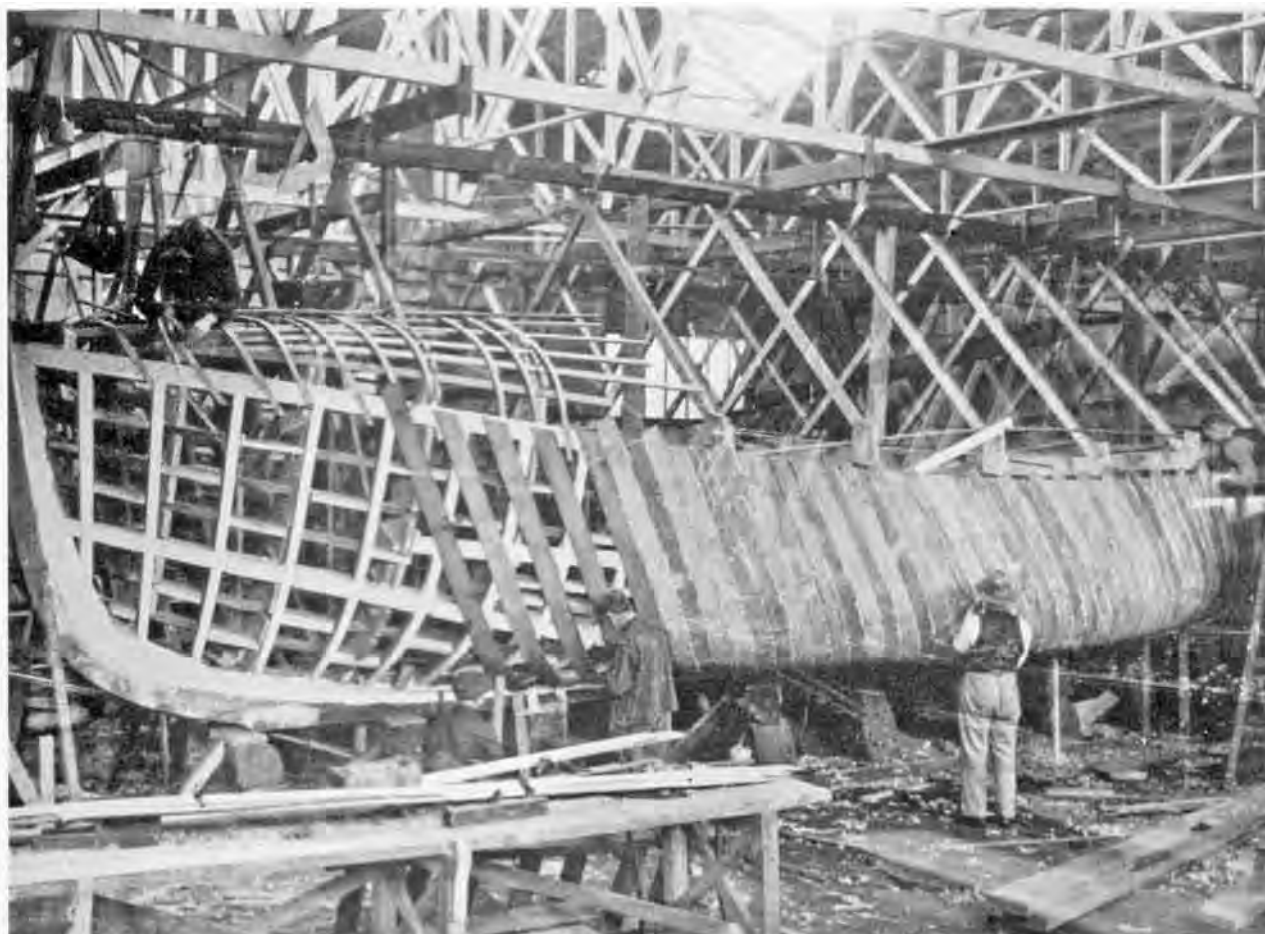
Type of pulling lifeboat in 1863.
Length 33ft x beam 8ft. 10 oars.
Note the 'RVs': Relieving Valves

The stem, sternpost, aprons, and deadwoods are usually of British oak. So far nothing better can be obtained for the purpose, but it is becoming more difficult to find good, sound oak crooks.

The timbers, or frames, are generally of straight-grained Canadian rock-elm, steamed and bent to shape, tapering in size from the keel to the gunwale. In the small boats some of the timbers run continuously across the top of the hog. The bulkhead frames are of oak crooks, the double-skin mahogany bulkheads being rabbeted to these frames, and to the bulkhead beams.

The beams are generally of Honduras mahogany, but the bulkhead beams are of British oak. They are dovetail-

* 112 years in the case of the *Charles Henry Ashley*, though she had a major refit in 2008-9. But her diagonally planked mahogany skin is original, and most of her structural timbers



Planking: four men are fitting the inner skin

Photograph: *The London Evening News*

checked to the stringers, and have knees connecting them to the frames. The deck stringers and gunwales are of Canadian rock-elm, tapered towards the ends, where they are connected together and to the aprons by breasthooks.

The outside planking is of double-skin construction, wrought diagonally. In the large boats it is of teak, but in all others it is of Honduras mahogany. The inner skin is first wrought, then coated with a white lead mixture, or marine glue, and thin unbleached calico is stretched over the surface, and ironed smooth. The outer skin is then fixed, the calico getting another coat of white lead or marine glue before each outer plank is fitted in place. All the planking is of selected timber, with straight grain and even texture, the weight of the mahogany not exceeding thirty-five pounds per cubic foot.

The decks and also the top of the end-boxes are of double-skin Honduras mahogany. In certain parts of the deck are hatches, that access may be had to the holds for the stowing and removal of the flotation-cases, &c. Most of the watertight bulkheads, are similarly built, the transverse ones rabbeted to oak frames and beams, and the longitudinal bulkheads are rabbeted to fore and afters.

Extra frames and floors are introduced forward, to withstand the constant hammering at sea, and the wrenching when being hauled up. There are large hauling holes with protecting plates, both forward and

aft for hauling up the boat on to a slip, or a carriage.

Formerly the decks of all open lifeboats had a reverse camber, so that water would drain to the relieving tubes which went down through the bottom of the boat on each side of the keel. But as all recent motor-boats have the relieving valves through the sides, above the deck, there is now a good camber; and the buoyancy and stability of the boat are also thereby improved. Side valves also make an improvement from a structural point of view, because the water-tight deck is intact, not pierced as it was for the old type of tubes^o, which frequently gave trouble from leakage, and involved difficult repairs. Further, any water shipped is got rid of much quicker, and a self-righting boat rights much faster, because the water scooped up when she is turning over, escapes so quickly through the side relieving-valves.

The flotation-cases are generally made of pine, treated chemically, then covered with canvas, and waterproof coated and painted. To ensure water-tightness they are

^o The older drain tubes were very simple and had been fitted from the time of the first lifeboats. A brass tube ran down through the deck and the hull. The deck end held a pivoting asymmetrical cap, which fell shut normally. Pressure of water on the cap, when the boat took it on board, caused it to flip open and drain. It was one of these 'relieving valves' that survivor Henry Robinson breathed through when he was held under the capsized *Eliza Fernley*



Flotation Cases (Buoyancy Tanks) being prepared for stowing inside the holds

Photograph: *The London Evening News*

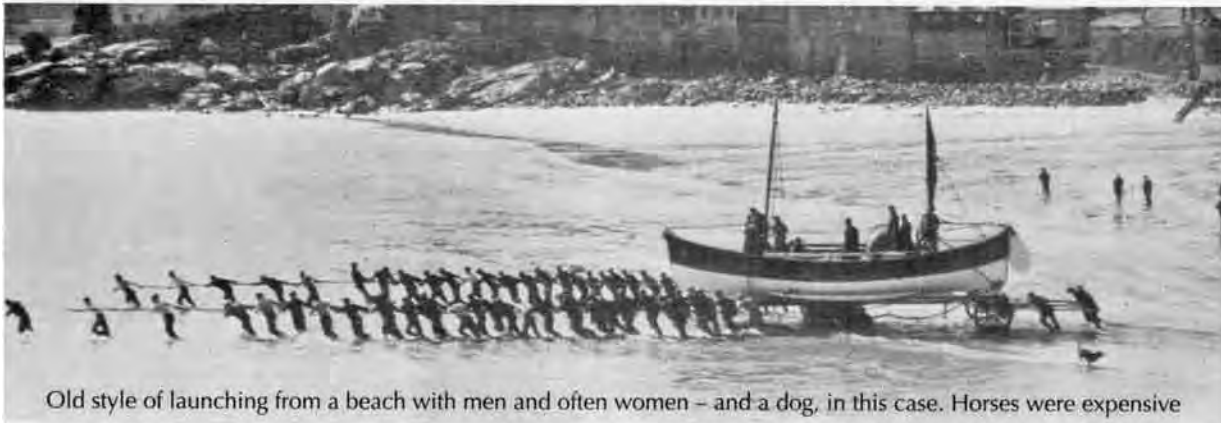
tested by being submerged for a stated time. A drain plug is fitted to each, and in the event of damage they can be drained, and repaired. As already mentioned these flotation-cases are fitted in every available space below deck, and along each side above deck in open boats.

The outside fender or belting varies in size according to the type of boat, but generally it is built solid, of cork and Canadian rock-elm, running continuously from end to end. At the bow there is a large fender or pudding in addition.

All fastenings, with a few exceptions, are of copper or naval brass. The double-skin planking is fastened together with copper clench nails, and both the inner and outer skins are fastened to the rabbets, stringers, and gunwales, by nails, screws, and through bolts. In every case the fastenings are ample, because the life of

such a boat depends greatly on the thorough nature of the fastenings.

The ventilation and drainage of these boats are important matters. Every space should have some ventilation, otherwise dry rot may easily occur, seeing the holds are so closely packed with flotation-cases. Precaution is taken by first treating the flotation-cases with a preservative. The holds are ventilated by a ball-valve near the top of each end-box bulkhead from each of which a tube is carried to the holds. When the boat is hauled up the drain plugs fitted to each compartment are opened, not only to make sure that these compartments are dry, but to assist in ventilating the holds. The ventilation of the end-boxes is direct, by a ball-valve in each end-box bulkhead. *JP Barnett*



Old style of launching from a beach with men and often women – and a dog, in this case. Horses were expensive

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Newsletter September 2019

The two Penobscot 13s that were in my shop were taken away in June by their owners, Joel Nelson of New Hampshire and Jon Schied of Virginia. Both have lugsail rigs, interiors painted up to the level of the seats and the exterior of the sheer strakes painted blue and green respectively. The shop looks a little bare and forlorn without them. I expect to have news about a new project next issue.

A highlight of my summer was sailing Ales Verdir's Penobscot 14 at Seca, on the Slovenian coast, in July. Seca is notable for its salt flats where sea salt is produced by traditional methods, and for a boatyard where volunteers restore traditional wooden boats. Our sail involved beating against a light headwind down a narrow canal, which revealed that some adjustments to the rig and rudder were needed. This entailed a couple of returns to shore and, by the time we made it to open water, we could see a thunderstorm approaching. Not wanting to be blown offshore we decided that discretion was the better part of valor and returned and loaded the boat onto its trailer.



All was not lost, however, Ales was happy to have me help with the rigging and my approval of the boat, which he had bought from the builder. We adjourned to a nearby restaurant where our wives, Amy and Neva, were already on the second Aperol spritzes, for a very good meal, a large sea bass caught locally. Ales is a Slovenian diplomat based in Brussels and his views on the EU and the effects of Brexit were most interesting.

Ales had actually invited us to visit last year but I did not get his email until our return. I promised to let him know when I would be back, in the meantime he had a great idea. Why not teach a boat building course in Slovenia? He wrote to some trade schools and one had responded to say that they were very interested. So while I was there I went to the Forestry and Woodworking School in Postojna to meet the principal and the woodworking instructor. I took the plans for the Penobscot 13 and I will go back in November and we will build a P13. A very exciting opportunity, needless to say.

Being away for almost the whole of July means that the *Grace Eileen* is not getting a lot of use, again. My son and daughter, Jack and Grace, took her out with friends while we were away and I've been out a few times. But it will be a short season with the trip back to Slovenia to plan for. With Jack and Grace now away for most of the summers, I am at that awkward stage that many boat owners come to, in need of crew. Not that I don't like sailing single handed but it seems a bit selfish at times.

There have been some launchings on variations of my designs. I don't usually recommend taking liberties with my plans, but sometimes the results are interesting. John Bourel built a highly modified Bay Pilot 18. Not content with lengthening the wheelhouse and changing the foredeck, he worked more flare into the bow, increased the length to 20' and the beam to 8'. I had advised him not to try to increase the beam but he did it anyway. He obviously knew what he was about.



Another builder who did not take my advice is Scott Vaitones, who built a strip planked peapod. He reloffed the stations, not a job for the faint of heart. As you can see from the photo, he also knew what he was doing.



Jim Millette of Heritage Boatworks at the St Augustine Lighthouse and Marine Museum sent the photo of a recently launched (unmodified) Penobscot 13. He writes, "The guys enjoyed the first build so much they wanted to build another."



The Penobscot 17 in the photo below was built ten years ago by Raivo Luik in Estonia. Now he's thinking about building a *Grace Eileen*.



Grace Eileen

LOA: 30' - WL 25'5" - Beam: 9'2"
Displacement: 7,000 lbs - SA 425sf



It had been a long winter. The piles of "boat stuff" were gathering dust in the attic. Outside, the trees were still bare and stark. But thoughts of the coming summer were creeping in with the drafts under the doors. How nice it would be to have a sailing dink for use while we were at anchor. But the cost!

We did have an inflatable, of course. It was a soft transom 8' inflatable with full floorboards and motor mount, currently restricted to rowing or motoring. With a little imagination, perhaps we could use that as a base for a sailing rig, too.

We started doodling sailing rigs. It had to be compactly stowable on our Bristol 26 (already heavily loaded with cruising gear) and fairly simple to set up since it would have to be mounted from a floating platform. We tried bipod masts, lateen rigs, tripod rigs, gunter rigs. But each variant left something to be desired.

Choosing the proper material for the spars was a question. Whatever we built would have to fit in the under-cockpit space on the Bristol, already crammed full of the uninflated inflatable. The spars would have to be segmented and light. Wood involved finishing work, and would be vulnerable to chipping in the compartment where it would be stored. Aluminum would leave black tracks as it was put

The Genesis of the Beach Ball

By Mark and Sarah Fisher

away, and besides, it would sink if dropped overboard during uprig. We decided on PVC pipe. It was easily available, "prefinished" white through and through, wouldn't scuff or rot, could be made to float and could be easily worked. Joints and fittings were almost already made in the form of plumbing fittings.

The rig we settled on was a fractional marconi rig. PVC introduces some problems of its own, however. Mainly, it is quite flexible. The forestay and shrouds would stabilize the center of the mast, but the upper portions would be free to flex. As there was no place to put mast partners, the mast would be stepped on the leg of a "T" frame, with a forestay and shrouds to transfer the force of the sail to the inflatable hull. The leg of the "T" protruded over the bow of the boat to form a bowsprit that stabilized the forestay, while the crossarm provided the anchor for both the shrouds and the leeboards.

The frame was primarily secured to the boat's hull with the standing rigging. The forestay carried down past the bowsprit to the towing ring at the bow, forming a "bobstay." The crossarm of the frame was run through the forward thwart mounting straps. To lock the crossarm in place, the shrouds were run down from their upper anchor points at the mid-point of the mast to two additional towing rings that were glued onto the sides of the hull (the only modification we made to the boat), and back up and around the crossbar.

We made a kickup rudder out of exterior sheathing plywood (it is made with waterproof glue, but has fewer veneers and no attempt to fill interior voids, at 1/4 the price of marine grade ply) and attached it via gudgeons mounted on the side of the motor mount. The leeboards and floorboards were also made of sheathing plywood heavily sanded, and with voids at the edges filled. We embedded bolts in the ends of the crossarm to serve as pivots for the leeboards.

The gooseneck for the boom was made from a bored out PVC "T" fitting, while the frame was formed using a second PVC "T" fitting, bored out so that the crossarm could run the entire width of the hull. The leg of the frame was left as a push fit into the fitting. The mast was stepped on a stub about 10" from the joint of the frame, using yet another heavily carved PVC "T."

Now we needed a sail. We had an old Daysailer jib. The mast was laid on the sail and about the amount of tension that would exist under sail was put on the rig. For someone used to aluminum or wood spars the amount of deflection was startling, 18" at the masthead. We traced the arc on the sail and cut it to match (as it happened, we needed to cut off all three corners). We got a sail that sets well, and can be easily flattened further to de-power the rig in "heavy airs" (8-10 mph). Tabling was sewn on the newly exposed edges, and batten pockets, corner reinforcing, and grommets were added. The three scrap corners were sewn together to form a handkerchief jib to fit on the 5' forestay. We decided it was number 001 of the Beachball Class, and made a sail insignia to match.

We rigged it without halyards, each sail is hooked to its position at its head with an S hook and tensioned with a downhaul. The main is loose footed and sheets to a block on the motor mount. The jib sheets trim to the ends of the mast step crossarm.

We were very pleased when we set it up. While there was more rigging than is appropriate on an 8' boat, once rigged, it neatly spread its dacron to the breeze. With its bowsprit and standing rigging under tension, the boat had a pronounced sheer. That, combined with the leeboards and a full length batten near the head of the sail combined to present us with the image of a miniature Dutch jaght.

And it sailed! With one person aboard sitting well forward, it tacked handily, and could work to weather easily. With two aboard, it still sailed easily but without the zippy acceleration of solo sailing, rising and falling through light chop with a slithering motion. For long downwind runs we learned to rig a temporary backstay to the rudder head.

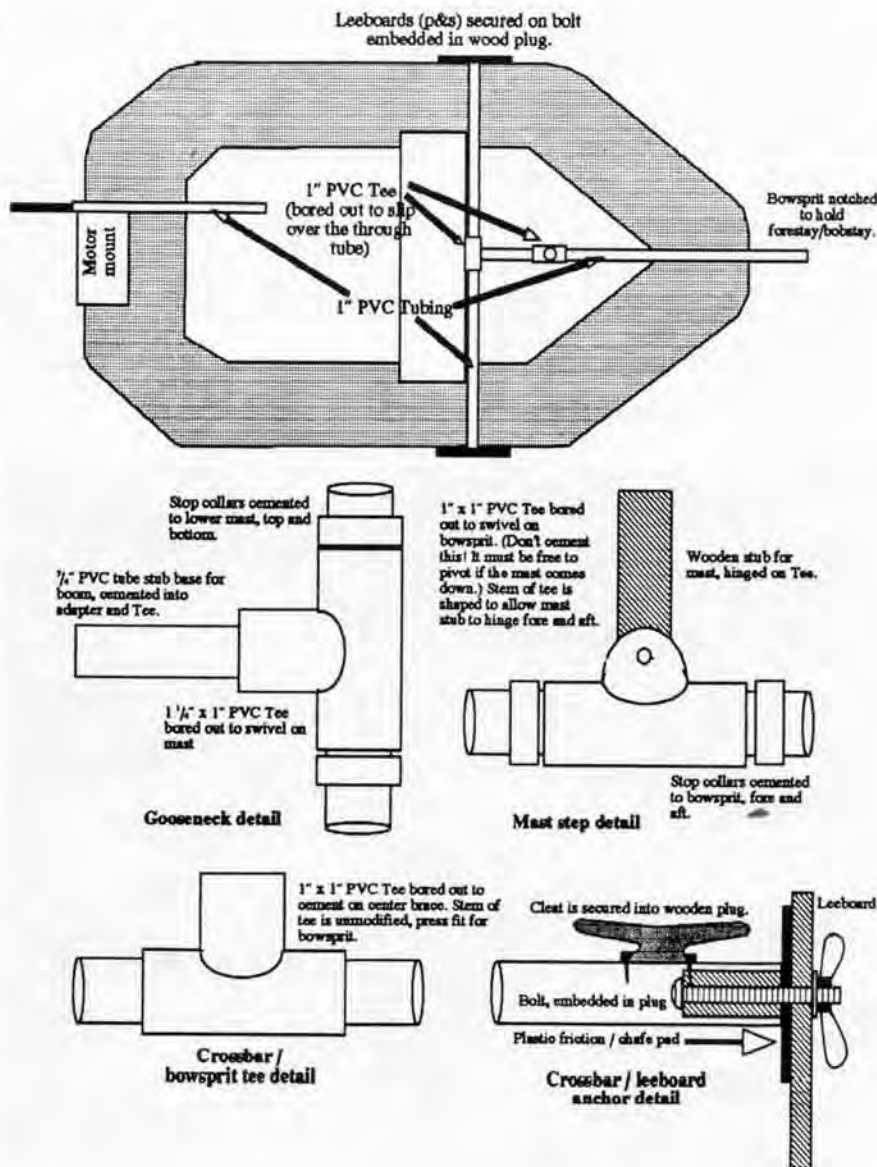


The Beach Ball

It is limited to light airs, however; beyond eight knots of wind the structure just starts to fold up. Sudden dismastings, while catastrophic looking can be dealt with (most easily by two people). Since the rig weighs nothing we just hoist it back into the air, tighten the shrouds and take off again.

After several years of use, our original bargain-basement inflatable bit the dust, but the sailing rig will be moving on to our new/used Avon Redcrest. We've used it many times to explore quiet anchorages, where the sound of an outboard would be an intrusion on the setting and our neighbors. Using our Beachball, we've quietly explored a variety of bodies of water that would be out of reach from a cruising sloop. The Beachball has been the "ugly duckling" guest at the annual Small Boat Festival at St. Mary's City, MD among the sharpies, ultra lites and traditional Chesapeake Bay small craft.

All interested persons are hereby invited to join the Beachball class. After some thought, the only class requirement we can envision is that the original hull must be a production inflatable. Requests for specs are invited and modifications encouraged. To register your Beachball send dimensions and a photograph to: Mark Fisher, 700 Erie Ave., Takoma Park, MD. 20912. Someday we may have to organize a regatta!



SPECIFICATIONS

All models: light grey.
Redcrest also available
in white.

REDCREST



LENGTH	Overall	9'3"	2.82m
	Inside	6'10"	2.08m
BEAM	Overall	4'6"	1.37m
	Inside	2'4"	0.71m
WEIGHT	Boat	43lbs	20kg
	Floor	24lbs	11kg
	Total	67lbs	31kg
STOWED	Boat	40" x 18" diam.	
		102 x 46cm diam.	
	Floor	35" x 22" x 2"	
		89 x 56 x 5cm	
CAPACITY	Wt. / Persons	700lbs 318kg	4
MAX. HP/kW Std. Shaft		4hp. 3kW	
ASSEMBLY TIME approx.		7 mins.	
MAX. TUBE DIAMETER		13" 33cm	
No. OF CHAMBERS		2 + thwart	

We're swinging at anchor in the deserted and calm waters of Church Creek. Across the bar, the Chester River is still full of its summer parade of sail, visible to us across the sheltering point of land as a row of slowly moving mastheads. The resident heron is lurking behind his point and we've got a lay day, with nothing on the schedule.

The quiet is wonderful. A crabber was in here earlier (WAY earlier) with a trot-line, but he's moved on, and the higher sun is driving the frying bacon smell up and out of the cockpit of *Ayesha*, our (heavily loaded) Bristol 26. Looking down the quiet waters of Church Creek... Naw, too much trouble to up anchor and explore, but still... What about our dinghy? Time for

A Day in the Life of the Beachball

By Mark Fisher

Beachball #001 to sail to the rescue!

I dive under the cockpit for the inflatable and spars, while Sarah occupies herself similarly in the forward cabin excavating the dinghy's floorboards (they increase her speed by 20%). Soon the cheery blue inflatable is bobbing beside her "mothership," and I'm setting the PVC frame in place. The motor mount is affixed, along with the rudder; the mast and sail are stepped, leeboards are fastened, emergency gear is added (oars, flares and

lifejackets), along with two eager crew, and we're off!

Ayesha looks sweet as we pull away, and there's something smugly pleasant in knowing that a flip of the rudder will return us to her, as opposed to the expectation of a slog to windward with 4' jointed aluminum oars, or the rattling drone of the outboard. Far enough now, let's see how close to the wind she'll sail. The boom is sheeted in until over the quarter. With our beam, that's not very close, but the wind is light, and keeping her masthead pennant flying means easy footing to weather. In a couple of tacks, we're back to our starting point.

Don't stop now! Where shall we go? The head of Church Creek forms part of the straits separating Eastern Neck Wildlife Sanctuary from Eastern Shore Maryland, a body of water cheerfully marked in the chart as 1/2' deep. That's anathema to most of those boats out there on the Chester, but duck soup for the Beachball. If it gets REALLY shallow, we can always walk beside her across the flats.

A gentle series of tacks brings us to the mouth of Church Creek, and the bridge that lets land-bound visitors onto Eastern Neck Wildlife Sanctuary. Four feet of clearance! Not a problem. Down comes the mast, pivoting aft, and out go the oars. Once through, we're in an estuary leading out to Love Point and the upper Chesapeake. The breeze is building, but the rig is well stayed when working to weather. Honking in on the outhaul and sheet flattens the sail, keeping the power down to a level we can use. We're upwind of home base, so it will be easy to get "home" even under oars, if we have to.

Working our way out the estuary, we come out from under the point of land. The chop of three miles of unobstructed Chester River mouth is too much for our 14" freeboard. Spray is coming over the tubes with each wave, and the Beachball is bobbing like her namesake. We turn back.

Wow! Downwind sailing is different! At a broad reach, the flattened sail scoots us along at the limit of what air supported spars and 1/8 dacron cord can stand, and when we are forced to head more downwind... Dismasted! Not a big problem, actually (though if you had heard me as it went down, you would have thought the *Titanic* was sinking again). The base of the mast had slipped back even with the crossbar of the step frame, the shrouds no longer had any purchase angle on the mast, and over she went. With the mast and sail down and in the water, we were bobbing quietly. Head up into the wind with the oars, swing the mast up into position, and whoosh! Down again.

There must be a better way. Vanity, if nothing else, requires that we SAIL back to *Ayesha*. What we're missing is a backstay. We can't rig it upwind due to the length of the boom, but for a given downwind leg? The jury backstay is rigged, and the rest of the schuss back to *Ayesha* is more successful. Down with the mast intentionally one last time to get under the bridge. A few spots have thinned out to the point that we need to walk beside the Beachball 'til we reach the channel of Church Creek proper, but then it's a final run, a quick head up beside her quarter, and... What's for lunch? I'm hungry!



Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge

USFWS

About ten years ago I hooked up with this group of small boat nuts who all showed up in a forgettable little fishing village down in the absolute corner of Texas. The gathering was scheduled for "the first full week of hurricane season." I towed my little 16' keelboat from San Diego across about 1,500 miles of desert. The plan was to launch our boats and sail the prevailing gale force winds through 200 miles of bayous, open fetch bays, oyster reefs, snakes, manta rays, mud and sunburn to have a fish boil under a cabana roof in another forgettable Texas town.

A bunch of 'em even brought little square boats made out of a sheet of plywood with sides, a mast made out of a 2"x4" and a sail made out of a Home Depot blue tarp. For some reason, when I start talking about going back "to Texas" my wife, Kate rolls her eyes and asks, "You're going to Texas...in June...for WHAT?" And I have a ready answer, "...it's where the cool kids are gonna be..."

So about a hundred boats showed up for this five day jaunt up past the King Ranch into places where "there ain't no rescue so don't bother trying to walk out if your boat sinks." This was, of course, back when the Texas 200 was just getting started. Since then it's gotten downright popular. Me? I don't even like what they do to fish and shellfish down they-ahhh but I do like goin' new places and telling about it later, if I survive. So.

Everybody was trying to launch their boats on a single one lane ramp. Things were getting pretty chaotic. Maybe I already mentioned it but I was once an Eagle Scout and never quite got over doing good deeds. There was this guy with Florida tags on a big ol' RV trying to back the cutest damn little tug-

A Really Neat Little Pocket Cruiser

By Dan Rogers



boat down that ramp and nobody was getting out of his way. I saw what was happening and walked over to his driver's door and asked him if he could use a hand. As this thing went along we got his tugboat launched and I got to run her across the turning basin to a moorage.

Just the coolest thing, that little tug. She was electric powered. All I had to do was use a little joy stick for the throttle and shift. Big, slow turning prop. Big rudder. I was in love! The guy showed up and came aboard. We were standing there in the cockpit, talking about things and realized that we were standing in ankle deep water. That little tugboat was sinking!

I ran her back to the ramp and we got her back on that custom built aluminum trailer.

And we started looking for the leak. Seemed like it was coming up the stern tube someplace. One of the guys who had showed up with one of those sheet of plywood with sides boats also came over. The three of us spent about the next two hours pumping every tube of uckumpuckee we could lay our hands on down that shaft alley trying to stop the leak. Back in the water, still sinking. Back out.

Finally the three of us were standing there in the tropical sun. We hadn't found the leak. The boat owner says, "I spent seven years building this boat. I just drove 2,000 miles from home to be here. I have a bilge pump. I'll be alright." This is a guy I had sorta known for a couple of hours. We'd been pretty focused on the emergency at hand. I doubt we had even exchanged last names. I looked him square in the eye.

"You can't go. You'll lose your boat."

"Naw. I'll be alright."

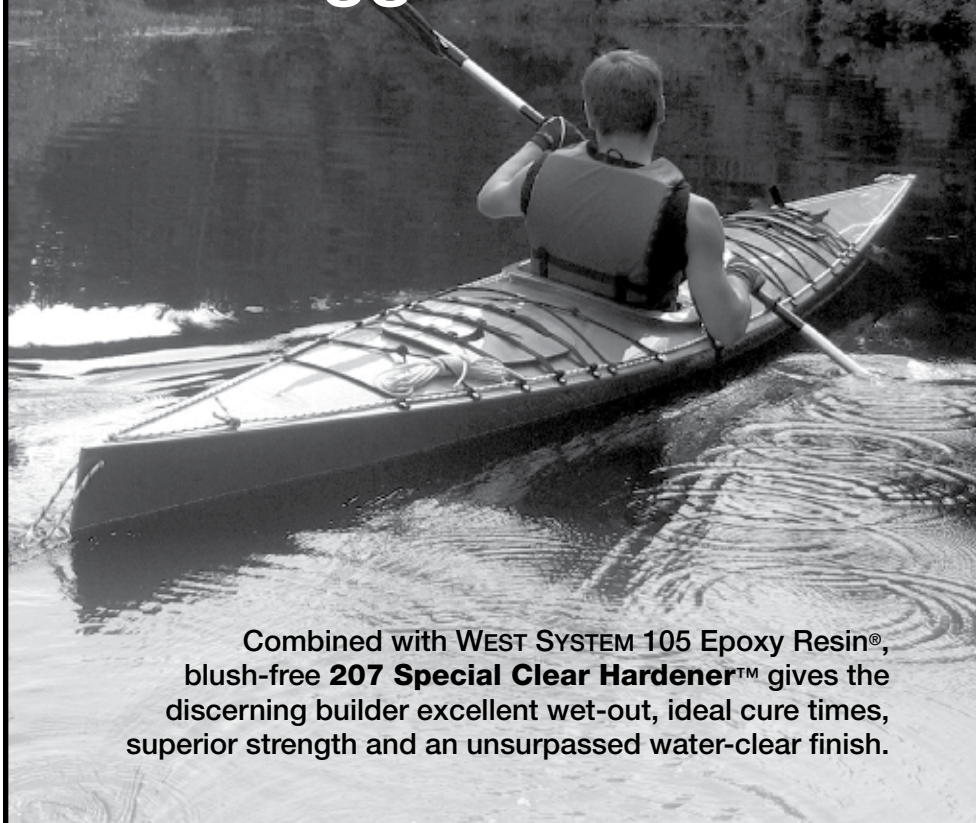
"No. You can't."

"Sh*t, I...can't...go..." And no, he didn't go.

As it resulted, we had multiple dismastings, lost rudders, capsizes and even one Potter-15 destroyed on a rocky beach. But there is a little tugboat that lived to cruise another day. She still lives in a place called Bradenton. We stayed in touch for several years. I even met up with him at a giant messabout in Oklahoma a few years ago.

I must say I never forgot that little boat. I bet you wouldn't either. I thought I'd include an image of a sister ship I've cruised alongside in Coastal Oregon and Puget Sound in Washington. A really neat little pocket cruiser. I'll tell you more about the Can-Du-EZ tugs sometime.

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Boat stories have a primal fascination, possibly because watercraft are a tool to aid us in surmounting an obstruction nature has placed between us and a goal, something important that we desire. From ancient times when man discovered a tree trunk could help him perform the magic of floating on water, boats have been high on the list of tools important to that small group of men who build and use them.

Usually the design of a given boat reflects a specific purpose, ferrying folks across rivers where there are no bridges or fords, or navigating creeks and small rivers that have many obstructions, shallows, rocky bottoms and fallen trees but offer rewarding opportunities to catch fish. To meet these requirements a craft must be small and light, but strong and sturdy, and accommodate two anglers whose roles alternate between fishing and paddling.

Although the fundamental details of small boat design are similar in southern Georgia and the Carolinas, there are distinctive regional differences between locals separated by only a few miles, as well as names, for example, bateaux, punts, pirogues and other names reflecting a builder or a river with which they are identified.

Thirty years ago in coastal Georgia and South Carolina most communities of any size had at least one such craftsman. Augusta, Georgia, had three, all trained by a fourth, Ernst Griner. Although these boats shared similarities, every builder cherished several unique design characteristics.

Shortly after we moved to Savannah in 1968 I was fortunate to fish with one of these four, Jack Barrett of Augusta, Georgia, in a boat he designed and built. Jack was a highly decorated WWII hero with five purple hearts, a master craftsman, an expert fisherman and the best wing shot with whom I had the pleasure to shoot. He used a Model 12 Winchester pump and is the only man I know that several times a year would shoot five quail on the rise with five individual shots (wild quail, not these pen raised sissies we slaughter today at commercial “preserves” and call it “hunting”). Fishing with Jack in his boat inspired my dream of designing and building my own.

I made several visits to established boat builders, like Racer Evans and Billy Bishop, two well known boat builders, taking pictures and drawing plans of their boats. To a man, they could not have been more generous spending time with me or more encouraging of my efforts to build a boat. They are all deceased and their shops closed.

Informative references on the history and development of regional boats include Percy Blandford's *An Illustrated History of Small Boats: A History of Oared, Poled and*

An Old Fisherman and His Boat

By Frank Carlton

Paddled Craft and Malcolm Comeaux's virtual essay, *Folk Boats of Louisiana*, http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Virtual_Books/Guide_to_State/comeaux.html.

Billy Bishop of Twin City, Georgia, built one of the best boats available at that time, light but stable, paddled well, guiding smoothly against the current and turning 90° with one stroke of the paddle. Aside from this high level of functionality, Bishop boats are works of art. Beautiful, perfectly executed craftsmanship.

Bishop was probably the best known of that group of craftsmen. Over the years he worked to decrease the weight of his boats, using thinner and thinner plywood, ending up with 1/4" for both sides and bottom. He also reduced the width of the sides, and increasing the rocker, to the point that freeboard could be marginal for two hefty anglers and their cooler. There are still a few of his boats around, highly prized. I know of one that hangs on a garage wall like a priceless museum artifact and one other, also carefully stored, never fished. For more details on Bishop, a meticulous craftsman, see Jack Leigh's excellent book, *The Ogeechee, A River and Its People*.

Ernest Racer, from Cleto, Georgia, built a boat with materials more similar to those used one hundred years ago, largely cypress, 1/2" to 3/4" thick for sides and bottom. Racer, like Bishop, was a talented and painstaking craftsman who built high quality boats that handled well and stood up to the wear and tear of fishing streams that frequently had shallow rocky bottoms crowded with branches if not trunks of old trees blocking the entire channel.

At that time those boats sold for \$200 to \$400. Now I know of only one boat currently built that is true to the original concept. It is made in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Ogeechee River Boat Company, by Jeff Robbins, modeled after boats built by Racer Evans. The ORBC website pictures several alternative models ranging from \$2,000 to \$7,000. Jeff uses rough cut cypress planks for the sides, planed down to 3/4" thick and 3/8" plywood for the bottom. His boats weigh 200 pounds and offer the ultimate in stability and another example of museum quality craftsmanship. The ORBC website is <https://ogeecheeriverboatcompany.com/>. Pictures of finished boats and construction details are available: <https://www.instagram.com/ogeecheeriverboatcompany>.



Jeff Robbins is, indeed, a talented craftsman and builds flawless boats. When he retires it will mark the end of an era. There is no other builder in sight to take his place.

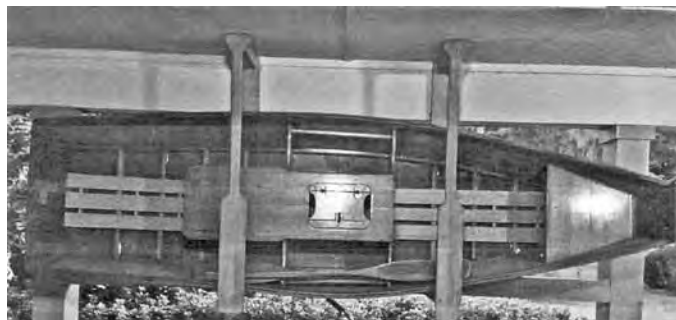
These distinctive regional craft created to fish these sometimes narrow, fast flowing rivers have made a vital contribution to the ease, safety and success of the effort. Infrequently the person who is going to use them was the builder. The majority were crafted by professionals who have a recognizable individual pattern they inherited or developed themselves over years of experience. Few of these men only built boats. The majority were talented cabinetmakers with established reputations, charging blue ribbon prices. They constructed only an occasional boat as a favor for a friend or simply because they loved to build them. An excellent example is Darryl Wasdin, in Screven, Georgia, who makes museum quality cabinets but has also built beautiful Ogeechee River style boats: <https://www.manta.com/c/mbs2fps/cabinet-shop>.

Exceptions in the past appear to be Billy Bishop, Twin City, Georgia, Racer Evans, Cleto, Georgia, Jack Barrett of Augusta and currently Jeff Robbins of Atlanta as noted.

A “low country paddling boat” is typically 14' in length measured along the chine, influenced by the dimensions of a sheet of marine plywood and the precaution of not having a seam across the bottom. The sides are 6" longer along the gunnel than along the chine. It is wider across the bow, 32", where the primary angler sits and tapers toward the narrow stern, just wide enough for the primary paddler to sit, 16" across the seat and tapering to 8" wide across the bottom. A central live fish well with adjacent dry storage is within easy reach of the angler. Four inches of rocker form an arc from bow to stern. This lifts the bow above the water and lessens the depth of the stern, significantly increasing maneuverability and allowing the boat to spin 90° with one stroke of the paddle.

Mackenzie drift boats, popular in the intermountain west, demonstrate a more

A Billy Bishop boat circa 1970.



A modern paddling boat.



exaggerated example of this design. In many western rivers instant maneuverability can be a matter of life and death due to the strength of the current, rocks and formidable tree roots exceeding 30' in diameter blocking the channel like giant hands waiting to trap ineptly rowed boats. More than one Mackenzie has been turned sideways against the roots by the current and flipped over, trapping the occupants underwater where they drowned.

In well made craft the sides of modern paddling boats are 1/4" to decrease weight, and the bottom is 3/8" to increase strength, BS1088 marine plywood. BS1088 is a British standard used internationally. Marine plywood manufactured to BS1088 standards is intended for hulls of boats and other aquatic applications. It has a Type A WBP phenolic bond glue (i.e., waterproof) and is manufactured from woods based on density,

bending strength, impact resistance and surface finishing characteristics.

None of the marine wood species are naturally durable. Preservative treatment is required. Prior to painting, glass cloth is added to the side/bottom junction to reinforce it or used to cover the entire bottom in higher quality boats. WBP stands for "Water and Boil Proof" and refers to withstanding boiling in water for several hours without de-laminating.

Reference: https://www.christinedemerchant.com/marine_plywood_grades.html.

The seats, stern, bow and fish well are 1/2" cypress. The frame is put together with stainless steel screws and bronze nails reinforce joining plywood to the frame, made watertight with West Systems epoxy. A colloidal silica filler is added to the epoxy to control viscosity and prevent runoff in vertical joints and to improve strength. After applying a metallic gray, oil based primer, a boat is painted with

Petit Duck Boat olive drab or gray. It weighs 80 pounds. I can put it in and take it out of the river by myself at age 86.

Twenty years ago, similar boats were seen frequently throughout the Georgia and Carolina low country. Now I cannot remember when I last saw another. I do not know, but surmise many factors contribute to this change. Possibly the availability of inexpensive aluminum boats is one major factor. Looking back at the satisfaction of researching, designing, building and then fishing in these beautiful and efficient wood boats reinforces the quality of the experience, the fulfillment of desires and ambitions which have been exceeded by the day to day reality of using a tool perfectly designed to do a specific job with an elegant grace that characterizes the best in art as well as function.

How rare is that? I suggest it is a trend of the future that is not comforting.



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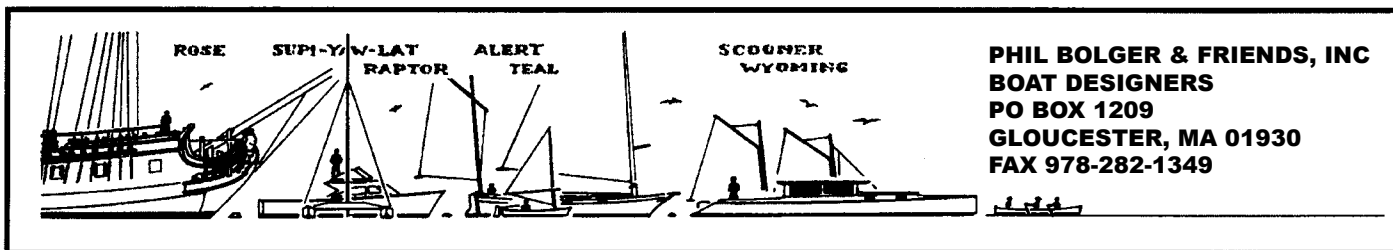
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Phil Bolger & Friends On Design

Design Column #542 in *MAIB*

25 Years of Needless Damage to New England's Fishing Industry and Ecology A Question of Inept Regulations versus 21st Century Fleet Sustainability

Some folks will roll their eyes about yet another piece in *MAIB* on this dark saga. And it has indeed been ongoing for quite a bit with the *Federal Register* key date being March 1, 1994 for the federal rules to be codified as legally binding, and here in *MAIB* with our first perspectives expressed in the July 1, 2007 issue including also discussions about design solutions via concept studies, a few full designs and policy solutions as well for those seeking to address the challenges.

Therefore, there will be familiar language here. But the intent here is to not offer a summary of every aspect of the situation now past the 25th Anniversary, that would be dozens of pages, the core of a decent sized book actually.

Rather, between inquiries as to the actual legal language, and this office's effort to indeed highlight for those in our coastal communities who never noticed, were not elected by then, have otherwise no connection to the topic but are troubled by that economic engine's underperformance here and across New England, here we focus on that original regulatory language, part of some 40,000 words on just that Tuesday's fisheries regs that triggered it all, along with the federal institutional framework to manage what can arguably be called America's oldest industry.

We all have our political views and we try to mess about in boats to get away from much of the noise, disputes, unpleasantness and frustrations that too often come with hands on daily small and big time politics. As touched upon in one of those earlier pieces though, this chunk of politics actually reaches right deep into our working waterfront, our boatyards, the pleasure boat storage yards, our chandleries, suppliers, vendors for services, all the way to local zoning, including the disintegration of oceancentric community focus, school curriculum, local nautical culture.

Hard to evade the corrosive impact of bad federal fisheries rules when our local oceancentric jobs and tax base are diminished, along with the outlook for the next generation to eventually follow family traditions or just a neighbor's example into a serious career in commercial boating because this particular ancient industry is withering under federal prohibitions against innovations towards economic and ecological sustainability. Even our affordable spot in that repair and storage yard is put at risk when the local industrial players get squeezed towards bankruptcy, selling out, taking with them more and more of the infrastructure we boaters need badly as well.

Hence, this effort to pull all this together in one good sized narrative. It is actually an interesting story extending from the highest federal policy levels down to the local working waterfront and back, a multi layered example of how a few bad assumptions can cascade into a region wide marine industrial decline, in fact, affecting the resilience of the nation's fishing fleets. This is a case study of poorly defined regulations dictating dark political and socio economic consequences down through states to the village on a cove, with many elected folks straining to help but in many ways remaining ineffectual because the root cause lies so far back in these rather obscure rules across less than two pages out of 35 pages of fisheries code of that Tuesday March 1, 1994.

And to us at PB&F it is a heavy-weight, but also reasonably noble, cause to be invested in. Doing boat design work here in America's oldest fishing port there would be no plausible ethical way to avoid being in the trenches on this. And even kids today are getting all too aware that we won't have sustainable nature in our waters without a sustainable industry that, on the one hand, judiciously harvests from it to feed folks and make a dignified living while indeed carefully balancing that take with what nature can reliably reproduce more or less in perpetuity.

We are all getting smarter about this and that is why myopic, painfully misconceived federal rules need to be challenged and then corrected. So this cannot be just venting and pointing fingers, but it also has to be about precisely locating the source of troubles and then offering policy and technical solutions. Messing about in boats can indeed also be the most serious of businesses.

Much of the following is from a range of documents shared with our community, elected folks, business leaders, but also, of course, industry folks and state and federal fisheries agencies neck deep in all of this.

On the Working Waterfront

March 1, 1994 will be remembered as one of the darkest dates in our fishing industry's history. Certain federal policies enacted that day have been allowed to cause much greater damage to our fleets and harbors than any natural cycles in our resource, the ups and downs in the national economy, or even events of war ever could. Because of astonishingly poor thinking on a number of levels, New England's oldest industry's future has been put at risk, unlike any calamity could since our founding. By late 2019 New England has yet to defend this industry, our working waterfront and thus our oceancentric future!

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Looking, for instance, at our oldest fishing port, Gloucester, as a key indicator of these policy failures. Started in 1623 as an economic enterprise based on commercial fishing, Gloucester's most important economic engine remains its port economy with its boats, port infrastructure, all sorts of shore-side support services scattered around Cape Ann, a lot of jobs and tax base, future.

For Gloucester to have been exemplary in its success as America's oldest fishing port for this long, this community, this industry, this fleet, did evolve constantly and adapted to all sorts of opportunities and challenges. There was, and is, not just unpredictable weather, uncertainties in which fish might be where in what quantity for how long and the shifting markets. Beyond daily minor tweaks here and there, we leveraged major innovations such as going from sail over to steam, over to Diesel power, going from eyes and ears to advanced electronics, from wood to steel, aluminum, fiberglass, advanced wood composites.

Fleet supporting businesses grew and adapted such as boat designers, boat builders, net makers, machinery specialists, but also services such as accountants and insurance brokers and, of course, transporters of fuel and fleet hardware into yards and onto the piers. Finally, and as central as the fleet to our prosperity, the fish processors, who'd value add to the catch for plain and expensive products, hauled to markets by road, rail, ships, today even TSA correct air transport.

What we have here in just 30,000 people strong Gloucester is one exemplary case of a highly evolved, complex social and industrial old growth community structure around a core of oceancentric ambitions, opportunities and success. However, New England's oldest industrial competency has been put at risk beginning March 1, 1994!

Our 16 Years of Independent Observation, Analysis and Engagement Based on Boat Design Since 1952

No need to rehash what many *MAIB* readers already know, so here a compressed self presentation. As designers of boats out of Gloucester since 1952 with over 680 designs to our name, pleasure boats, fishing craft, research vessels, even work for the US Navy and Marine Corps, across 67 years we have come to develop particular sensitivities to what makes for safe, economically viable low/least carbon 21st century sustainable fishing craft.

Having gotten married in the spring of 1994 we had been distracted with building our new life together, certainly not expecting such incoherent policy thinking from the highest National Marine Fisheries Service NMFS level (a division of NOAA) and the regional New England Fisheries Management Council as issued on March 1, 1994.

We finally noticed by mid 2002 that this fleet's evolution eight years into the new regime seemed to be going in the wrong direction. Upon further study, our fleet's 370 years of innovation in boats, catch methods and thus our fishing ports had, in fact, come to a grinding halt. March of 2003 marked the beginning of our public efforts to call for corrective action before these industry managers in public. With the tragic history of their policy failures, these policy corrections are even more urgent today 16 years later.

Suddenly, Since 1994 the Increasing Effects of Arbitrarily Induced and Destructive Industrial Stagnation

On March 1, 1994 the *Federal Register*, the record of rules and regulations, in Vol 59, No 40, under CFR 651, documents begin on pg 9872 how a confluence of governmental, ecological and industry interests produced an astonishingly bad set of rules that would come to damage the industry and certainly the ecology of eventually over 26 fisheries across 25+ years now.

Leading the effort was a small cadre of marine biologists, lawyers, administrators and law enforcement folks (however, apparently no boat designers, boat builders or any other sorts of boat specialists) here in the Northeast Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), a division of NOAA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. That handful of feds was certain that, in order to protect the sustainability of the resource, we must limit undue growth of the fishing fleet. Working through the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) they thought it wise to limit fishing boats by boat length, boat tonnage (so called) and boat engine power, so called horsepower.

Limiting the fleet's size seems a reasonable enough perspective! Who would want a fleet too big, too powerful, too hungry to be sustainably supported by that precious web of life out there? We could ruin the fish stocks in a matter of years and fleet, port economy and community for decades to come.

However, out of three seemingly simple technical controls, chosen apparently without the boat specialists involved, they picked two bad ones! And that failure has been disastrous. Since March 1, 1994 NOAA/NMFS/NEFMC dictates a short and wide, an obese fleet! Neither fleet nor significant stretches of the ecology out there have been managed sustainably.

A Brief Introduction to the Fisheries Management System Formalities and Related Federal Rule Making

The nation's fisheries are divided into eight districts according to Magnusson-Steven Act of 1976 (MSA). New England is one such, consisting of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, run by the NMFS Northeast Regional Office out of Gloucester, Massachusetts, and supported by the New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) out of Newburyport, Massachusetts. The latter is the formal forum within which to discuss fisheries matters, emerging fish stocks, regulatory concepts, etc.

After defining the discussion agenda, policy proposals, public discussions, the NEFMC results were then examined by NMFS to eventually find their way into law via the *Federal Register* and thus findable online.

Formatted to a three column layout, each page can offer around 1,200 words which, across these 35 pages of Northeastern Fisheries Rules of that day, can add up to over 40,000 carefully phrased legally relevant words, not an easy task for fishers, boatyard folks or even elected leaders on all levels to read through casually, particularly since these regulations keep coming.

On the cover page these regulations are entitled, "*Federal Register*, Tuesday, March 1, 1994, Part IV, Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 50 CFR 651 Northeast Multispecies Fishery; Final Rule."

These pages 9872 through 9907 offer a fisheries regulatory example of solid formalities, rigorous documentation of process and detailed policy definitions, all appearing thorough and proper. But from our boat/fleetcentric perspective (after all, this is an industry based on boats and thus fleets) there are also painfully plain to see the remarkable substantive limitations of institutional focus with apparently no related specialist staffers on hand, thus the outright absence of unavoidably relevant discussion points in this process and, as a dark consequence, the lack of necessary balance in regulatory ambitions between industry economics and resource ecology.

Meaning they got major technical ideas simply wrong and did not notice nor had mechanisms to double check for this and that across a number of levels. Apparently not even freely accessible references were consulted to make sure that their technical assumptions were indeed appropriate, their choices proper to effect certain outcomes.

And while in the *Federal Register* of that day, after introductory remarks to these 35 pages, over 58 anonymous condensed comments from individuals, fisheries and ecology centric organizations and politicians are laid out with each followed by well crafted NEFMC and NMFS responses, none of these did point out the importance of matching boats to the fleet and to resource-management priorities either. This may be understandable for fishers focused on catching fish, feeding family and bank loans and with most ecologists seemingly stove pipe centric just concerned with overfishing.

However, we find no such voices either from technical universities, boat/fleetcentric round tables, not even federal voices from within the far flung NMFS/NEFMC organizations with boat/fleetcentric core competencies to contribute towards at least an early raising of the need to integrated 21st century sustainability based boat and thus fleet characteristics. Hence the technically tragically limited perspective put into law with progressively darker consequences of these regulatory distortion of this industry are reflected in so much damage across now 25 years. As touched on earlier, Phil and I were off getting together, doing wedding-planning.

Here the Original Regulatory Language Scanned out of the *Federal Register* of Tuesday March 1, 1994, Vol 59, No 40, Under CFR 651, pp 9872- 9907. §651.4 Vessel Permits

"Beginning on May 1, 1994, any vessel of the United States that fishes for, possesses

or lands multispecies finfish, except vessels that fish for multispecies finfish exclusively in state waters and recreational fishing vessels, must have been issued and carry onboard an authorizing letter issued under paragraph (a)(8)(v) of this section, a valid limited access multispecies permit, a valid hook gear only permit, or a valid possession limit only permit issued under this section. Until May 1, 1994, vessels that have been issued 1993 Federal multispecies permits, not otherwise subject to permit sanctions due to enforcement proceedings, may fish for, possess, or land multispecies finfish in or from the EEZ. Any other vessel of the United States may obtain an interim letter of authorization to fish for, possess, or land multispecies finfish until May 1, 1994, by submitting a 1993 permit application.

(1) Eligibility in 1994. (i) To be eligible to obtain a limited access multispecies permit for 1994, a vessel must meet one of the following criteria... (2) Eligibility in 1995 and thereafter. (3) Change in ownership."

And here now, below, the crux of the matter, the basic rules for what a vessel and its associated fishing permit must adhere to, all within the context of the extant fleet, in order to prevent the fleet from outgrowing the resource, in principle a sensible idea in the interest of hopefully balancing out fleet fishing capability with what the biomass out there can sustainably support in terms of controlled annual take. However, the majority of these metrics are odd choices:

"(4) Replacement vessels. To be eligible for a limited access permit, the replacement vessel must meet the following criteria: (i) The replacement vessel's horsepower may not exceed by more than 20% the horsepower of the vessel it is replacing as of the date the vessel it is replacing was initially issued a 1994 limited access multispecies permit, as specified on a valid application for a permit under this section; except that, the horsepower of the replacement vessel may not exceed the horsepower of the vessel being replaced if the horsepower of the vessel being replaced has been increased through upgrade or vessel replacement from that specified when the vessel being replaced initially applied for a 1994 limited access multispecies permit; and

(ii) The replacement vessel's length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage may not exceed by more than 10% the length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage of the vessel being replaced, based on specification provided in the initial 1994 application for a limited access multispecies permit, except that the length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage of the replacement vessel may not exceed the length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage of the vessel initially issued a limited access multispecies permit if any or all of these specifications have been increased through upgrade or vessel replacement from that specified when the vessel being replaced initially applied for a 1994 limited access multispecies permit. For purposes of paragraph (a)(2), a vessel not required to be documented under title 46, U.S.C will be considered to be five gross registered tons. For undocumented vessels, net tonnage does not apply."

To Clarify Key Technical Terms at the Heart of CFR Part 651's Dictates Upon the Physical Shape of the Fleet:

"Horsepower is a common technical term for a given engine's output, typically supplied by its manufacturer.

Length is just that, the overall measurement from the tip of the bow/forward boat end to its stern/after end.

Gross Registered Tonnage is (NMF) a measure of vessel size based on the vessel's total internal volume (*Wikipedia*), or "the moulded volume of all enclosed spaces of the ship."

Net Tonnage (*Wikipedia*) is a dimensionless index calculated from the total moulded volume of the ship's cargo spaces by using a mathematical formula. (...) Net tonnage is used to calculate the port duties. (...) Net tonnage is not a measure of the weight of the ship or its cargo and should not be confused with terms such as 'deadweight tonnage' or 'displacement'. (...) In the US net tonnage is used to determine eligibility for registering boats with the federal government. (...), also referred to being documented. Both 'tonnage' terms are drawn from the 'International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ship, of 1969.'

And why the term "Replacement Vessel?" NMFS appears to outline the limitations of upgrades allowed under these rules extant or to new boats by explicitly highlighting via replacement vessel what is possible and what is not. After all, the existing older fleet needed contrasting with brand new ones in the interest of not preventing an uncontrolled fleet growth in the interest of preventing further overfishing; starting on p 9872, and in greater depth via the language in Amendment 5 (on p. 9873, NMFS) lays out its reasoning for these new rules, as triggered by ominous declines in certain fish populations.

With this Understanding in Mind, Reading the Next Pertinent Section of the March 1, 1994 Rules Will be Easier

"(5) Upgraded vessel. To remain eligible to retain a valid limited access (p.9887) multi-species permit, or to apply for or renew a limited access multi-species permit, a vessel may be upgraded, whether through refitting or replacement, only if the upgrade complies with the following limitations:

(i) The vessel's horsepower may be increased, whether through refitting or replacement, only once. Such an increase may not exceed 20% of the horsepower of the vessel initially issued a 1994 limited access multispecies permit as specified in that vessel's permit application for a 1994 limited access multispecies permit; and

(ii) The vessel's length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage may be upgraded, whether through refitting or replacement, only once. Such an increase shall not exceed 10% of the length, gross registered tonnage, and net tonnage of the vessel initially issued a 1994 limited access multispecies permit, as specified in that vessel's application for a 1994 limited access multispecies permit. This limitation allows only one upgrade, at which time any or all three specifications of vessel size may be increased. This type of upgrade may be done separately from an engine horsepower upgrade.

(iii) A replacement of a vessel that does not result in increasing horsepower, length, gross registered tonnage or net tonnage is not considered an upgrade for purposes of this section."

Between 651.4.4 'Replacement Vessels' and 651.4.5 'Upgraded Vessels' the takeaway is that however which particular modifications are done when in whatever sequence on a given boat, the total legally allowable upgrade for length and tonnage is an extra

10% maximum, and that for the engine is an extra 20% maximum. Once the one-time 'upgrades' are spent, no further alteration can be pursued.

Getting Two out of Three Metrics Wrong, Codification of Institutional Lack of Analytics on Highest Governmental Levels?

So what is wrong with this federal language codifying certain limitations upon the fleet to avert further damage to the resource? After all MSA has mandated for NMFS to indeed do this. Why are most of these metrics 'odd choices'? To summarize:

1. Telling the actual horsepower of an engine in a boat via its type plate can be plausible. But this can also turn out to be unreliable, since engines can quietly be modified internally. However, most fishermen prize the reliability of stock engines.

2. Boat length simply is not size! Instead, a boat's actual weight (as in displacement) is a solid measure of how big a boat is, meaning how much fishing gear it might be able to carry and thus how hard it might be able to fish. Gloucester, for instance, has had the technical capacity to weigh just about all of our fishing boats since the '80s. As part of its marine-industrial infrastructure, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, has the Northeast's largest machine that can weigh boats and small ships with up to 400 tons (weight!) or 800,000lbs in lifting and thus measuring capability, sort of like a bathroom scale for humans. However, no fishing vessel in the Northeast weighs as much as 400 tons of weight empty.

3. Boat Tonnage has been defined across the long history of boat design, construction and operations in a range of at times confusing and thus uncertain ways.

As just pointed out, for the 3/1/94 regulations, a particularly ill suited set of two versions had been picked by folks clearly not knowing any better. Both Gross Registered Tonnage and Net Tonnage appear to have been taken straight from arcane large scale Ship Classification Rules out of a very different industrial universe than that of 99.9% of all fishing craft ever active in New England.

With two out of three rules wrong, these metrics that define the fleet for decades to come would not have been plausible to find put into law out of this large and far flung federal bureaucracy. After all, they could cultivate access to broad scale expertise, possibly even drawing input from fellow federal but much larger boat designers, owners global operators, the US Navy. This year USN has a \$194 billion budget with a workforce of 25,000 engineers, 2,000 PhDs in just their Naval Research & Technology Establishment, folks to perhaps knock on the door of.

With a 2019 NMFS budget of around \$810 million, one would assume that they'd be interested in leveraging very well endowed resources of a fellow federal agency down the road in DC. Of course, we have offered what they needed to know for free and at a great expense to us across now over 17 years of engagement.

To repeat, having gotten married in spring of 1994, we had been distracted with building our new life together, so were certainly not expecting such incoherent policy thinking as issued on March 1 1994 from the highest NMFS and NEFMC levels, here in Massachusetts, with the regional office of NMFS even residing in Gloucester. We finally noticed by mid 2002 that this fleet's evolution eight years into the new regime

seemed to be going in the wrong direction. And upon in house research and deliberations, we first raised our concerns in public before NEFMC at their March 2003 meeting here in Gloucester.



Phil trying one more time to reason with the Council.

Prohibiting any Chance at Pursuing Sustainability with Longer and Leaner Hull Geometries, Most Multi Hull Approaches and even Advanced Motor Sailing Types

For over 16 years we have argued in public orally, and in formally submitted comments, that it was only weight/so called displacement of the boat and (grudgingly) horsepower, that technically can be plausible metrics to limit the growth of the fishing fleet so as to not overpower what nature can produce sustainably. Here is why:

Limiting the fishing boats' length forced them to become wider/fatter for their length, and thus increasingly inefficient to operate, along with often poorer sea keeping behavior, in so many ways an non-ecological high carbon fleet structure.

And tonnage, a de facto meaningless metric since technically, and thus legally, it is hard to define conclusively, no matter how many legal disputes were initiated between fishing families and NMFS. Due to these two failed out of three metrics, NOAA/NMFS/NEFMC has since 3/1/94 dictated a short and wide obese fleet!

This is not opinionated polemics! It is physics, resulting in hard economics under \$1.10, \$2.50, \$4.00 and \$5.00 per gallon of Diesel. To highly compress our analysis of one local de facto high-carbon (HC) 32' x 12' x 300hp type dictated since 1994, vs its low-carbon (LC) sister ship per hours of annual operation, here are NMFS dictated cost penalties of HC craft vs prohibited LC types:

HC type @ 4.26gph (or 1.46mpg) for 1,500hrs = 6390gals annual consumption (plus cost of owning bigger 300hp drive train).

LC type @ 1.13gph (or 6.67mpg) - 1500hrs = 1695gals annual consumption (plus cost of much leaner 100hp drive train).

HC type annual cost @ 1994 level \$1.10 = \$7,029, @ \$2.50 = \$15,975, @ \$4.00 = \$25,560, @ \$5.00 = \$31,950.

LC type annual cost @ 1994 level \$1.10 = \$1,865, @ \$2.50 = \$4,237, @ \$4.00 = \$6,780, @ \$5.00 = \$8,475 (10/19 DIESEL = \$2.70/gal Massachusetts tax free).

Previous generations already knew that longer but leaner boats, running to same or less engine power, will offer much improved operations economics, along with typically also better seaworthiness! And under strict scientifically confirmed total allowable

catch limits per year, a fleet designed explicitly around weight and engine power limits would, over the last 25 years, have come to reach unprecedented definitions of fishing sustainably, reasserting a leading edge as the US' oldest and by now likely smartest fishing fleet, assuring that the resource, the fleet and our port are indeed viable long-term.

This advanced fleet would have supported broad developments of advanced fishing methods, particularly choke species evading catch methods to only catch that fish which is in adequate supply. And well established Federal Fleet Assistance Programs remain on the books that would have helped finance this structural shift towards a 21st-century fleet. In fact, they still can!

In summary, by late 2019, 25 years through these federal rules, fishers are still not allowed to explore longer and leaner hull concepts, may look, at best, at short and fat catamarans and perhaps, pointlessly

so, waste energy on exploring short and fat motor sailing geometries, just because in 1993-94 a handful of folks in the Regional NMFS office here in Gloucester could not figure out three simple metrics to define a sustainable fleet by. To boot, no fishing industry leaders appear to have read or understood these rules. And neither did any of the typically so advanced minded ecologists groupings, not even the largest globally active ones.

Therefore, as a first step into the future, no slender shapes are even deemed conceivable by most of those good folks familiar with fat hull proportions of 2.2, to 3.5:1 length-to-beam ratios. In contrast, between the 1930s and 1970s conversions of former naval vessels saw fishermen go out to sea, well offshore, in hulls measuring up to 7:1. And over 100 years ago, even large fishing schooners under mighty rigs and massive clouds of sail could measure up to 4.5:1.

From automobiles and trucks, trains, massive ships, to super long haul airliners just about every other industry based on transportation has robustly pursued ever-greater savings in fuel burn per distance travelled or cargo hauled, with or without dedicated federal or state incentives.

In stark contrast, the American fishing industry may be the sole industry left, which by federal dictate across 25 years since 1994, has been prohibited from even beginning first steps towards entering the 21st century with least fuel burn ambitions to recover industry resilience, upon which to plausibly base the pursuit of the most selective catch methods under our ever broadening scientific and technical knowledge around resource sustainability. After all, there is no fishing industry sustainability without resource sustainability and vice versa.

(Continued in January Issue)



In your face wide bow on short lobster boat as well.

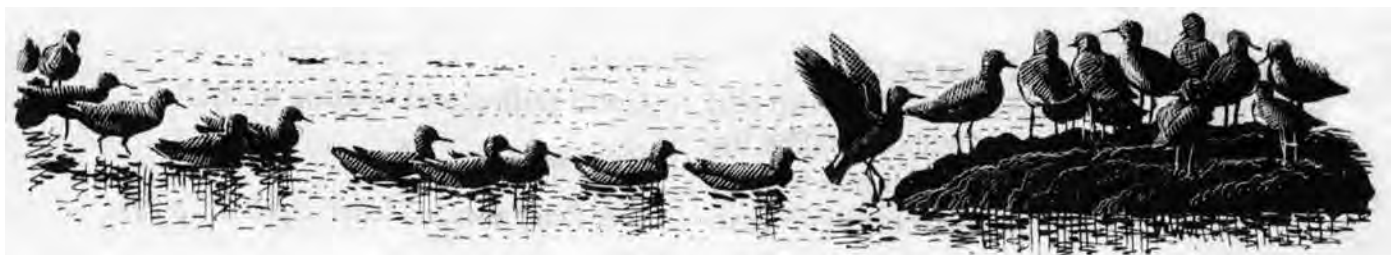


Two sister ships almost half as wide as they are long.

300hp straining to move that lumpy hull at just over hull speed.



One of the more cartoonish limited length fishing boats.



MIAMI, FLORIDA: The Coast Guard rescued one person from the water after his boat capsized near Rybovich Marina in West Palm Beach. A Coast Guard Station Lake Worth Inlet 33' Special Purpose Craft Law Enforcement boatcrew rescued the boater and transferred him to commercial salvage with no medical concerns. Commercial salvage also righted the sailing vessel. Coast Guard Sector Miami watchstanders had received a report from a nearby boater of an 18' sailing vessel capsizing with one person aboard.



ST PETERSBURG, FLORIDA: A Coast Guard crew recovered a man from the water after he was ejected from his boat in Tampa Bay. A Coast Guard Cutter *Resolute* (WMEC620) crewmember spotted a boat turning in circles and directed their rescue boatcrew to investigate. Once on scene, the rescue boat crew recovered a man from the water and were able to stop the unmanned boat with the help of Eckerd College Search and Rescue. A crewmember aboard the cutter *Resolute* had contacted Coast Guard Sector St Petersburg watchstanders reporting the nature of distress. The man was released with no injuries and continued his voyage.

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA: The Coast Guard suspended its search for a small private aircraft and pilot in the Gulf of Mexico. Coast Guard crews searched over 6,265 square nautical miles for approximately 21 hours but were unable to find the aircraft or pilot. Involved in the search were Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew, Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew, Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater Lockheed HC-130 aircrew, Secretaria de Marina 267' Offshore Patrol Vessel *ARM Veracruz*.

"After the utmost consideration and review of all factors involved in this search and rescue case, the Coast Guard has made the difficult decision to suspend its active search efforts," said Cmdr Drew Casey, search and rescue mission coordinator from the Eighth Coast Guard District. "We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Dr Steven Schumacher.

FORT MACON, NORTH CAROLINA: The Coast Guard assisted four mariners aboard their disabled vessel approximately 90 miles southeast of Georgetown, South Carolina. Sector North Carolina watchstanders received a report from District Seven watchstanders that the good samaritan vessel *Costco Hope* had located the 67' fishing vessel *Morgan Lea* that had become disabled due to engine failure and was in need of assistance. An Air Station Elizabeth City HC-130J Hercules aircrew was launched to provide visual confirmation of the disabled vessel and the Coast Guard Cutter *Heron* was launched to tow the vessel into port.



Our Coast Guard in Action

Over a two day period the crew of the *Heron* towed the disabled vessel seven miles south of Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina, where a Station Fort Macon 47' Motor Lifeboat crew took over the towing operation and assisted the vessel into Morehead City State Port Berthing. There were no reported injuries to the mariners.

Involved in the search and efforts to assist the *Morgan Lea* were Coast Guard Cutter *Heron* crew, Coast Guard Cutter *Marlin* crew, Air Station Elizabeth City HC-130J Hercules aircrew, Station Georgetown 45' Response Boat Medium boatcrew, Air Station Savannah MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew, Station Fort Macon 47' Motor Lifeboat crew, Good Samaritan vessel *Costco Hope*.

ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY: The Coast Guard medevaced a man off a cruise ship 118 miles southeast of Atlantic City, New Jersey. District Five watchstanders received notification via satellite phone that a man aboard the cruise ship *Adventure of the Sea* had experienced symptoms of a stroke and was in need of medical assistance. Watchstanders consulted the duty flight surgeon who recommended a medevac. An Air Station Atlantic City MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew was launched and medevaced the man while an Air Station Elizabeth City HC-130J Hercules aircrew provided support. The man was transported to awaiting emergency medical services personnel at Air Station Atlantic City.

NORTH BEND, OREGON: A Coast Guard aircrew medically evacuated a 28-year-old man Friday morning off the fishing vessel *Alaska Ocean*, which was operating 15 miles west of Coos Bay. A Coast Guard Sector North Bend aircrew hoisted the man after he experienced chest pains and seasickness. Watchstanders at the 13th Coast Guard District Command Center were notified by the company which owns the fishing vessel that the man was suffering medical issues.

A constant communication schedule was established between the sector and the fishing vessel. At 6am, after conferring with the duty flight surgeon, the sector dispatched an MH-65 Dolphin rescue helicopter crew. The rescue crew arrived on scene at 9am and began hoist operations to transport the man. The aircrew brought him to the sector's air base, where he was transferred to awaiting emergency medical services. The current condition of the man is unknown.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS: The US Coast Guard suspended its search for a missing man and three children in the waters off Kennebunkport, Maine, pending new information. Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Northern New England command center received a radio distress call from a man reporting his boat capsizing with three children on onboard. The Coast Guard lost radio communications with the distress caller but conducted a 22-hour search which included the following assets, Coast Guard Station South Portland, Coast Guard Station Portsmouth Harbor, Coast Guard Cutter *Reef Shark*, Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod. Search patterns spanned a total of 1,523 square nautical miles and included Maine Marine Patrol, Wells Police Department and other local participants.

OREGON INLET, NORTH CAROLINA: The Coast Guard assisted the crew of a disabled sailing vessel east of Oregon Inlet. Sector North Carolina watchstanders received a distress call via VHF-FM radio from the crew of the *Puffin* reporting that their 70' sailing vessel had become disabled in heavy seas 30 miles east of Oregon Inlet. The crew activated their onboard emergency position indicating radio beacon to help provide the vessels location to the Coast Guard aircrews.

An Air Station Elizabeth City MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew was launched along with an HC-130J Hercules aircrew. The Hercules aircrew arrived on scene to establish visual confirmation of the vessel. The Jayhawk helicopter aircrew arrived and transported all four boaters to Air Station Elizabeth City where they were met by emergency medical services personnel. There were no reported injuries to the boaters.

CAPE LOOKOUT, NORTH CAROLINA: The Coast Guard medevaced an oil tanker crewmember from an approximately 260 miles southeast of Cape Lookout. Watchstanders at the Coast Guard's 5th District command center were notified by watchstanders from the Coast Guard's 7th District command center that a 39-year-old man aboard the 723' oil tanker *New Activity* reportedly suffered injuries after experiencing a fall and was in need of a medevac.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew and an HC-130J Hercules aircrew launched from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City. The Hercules aircrew arrived first, providing visual oversight and communications support while crewmembers aboard the Jayhawk arrived on scene and hoisted the man aboard the helicopter.

The mariner was medevaced to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point where he was transferred to an emergency medical services helicopter aircrew, who brought him to Vidant Medical Center in Greenville.



Looking at the latest sailboat advertisements, I wondered what happened to the “simple” sailboat of my youth. On further consideration, I realized that no boat is simple. There are all those parts that are needed to sail even a pram. We have the mast and mast step/bracing, the rudder with gudgeons and pintles, the tiller, the lines to hold the sail up and sprit pole, the mainsheet with at least one block, the traveler with its attachments, the boom, the dagger/center board and all the pieces that make up the hull.

I should know about all the pieces that are needed for a wooden Optimist Pram as I built one in our living room. Unfortunately I missed one measurement so it became a pessimist pram. It sailed quite well and the people who purchased it were quite pleased with the craft. Thinking about that boat and looking at all the rigging, lines, blocks and the rest that are included in an Optimist Pram these days, what I considered a simple sailboat can be seen as complicated.

I was caught with a safety interlock problem with our emergency generator for the house. It seems the generator will not run if there is a lot of sun on the natural gas pipe that supplies the gas to the engine. The sunshine heats the pipe, which increases the pressure in the line. The safety valve will not open if the pressure in the line is higher than the setting that allows the valve to open. The recommended solution was to shade the pipe from the sunshine. I should have thought of the solution earlier, as I remember liquid gas cans on boats having an expansion problem if the fuel can for the outboard motor was in the direct sun in the boat for a period of time. I wonder if the natural gas outboards that are coming on the market will have a similar problem on hot days on the water?

Repair versus replacement is always a question and the answer is usually decided by age and cost. One of our refrigerators had a condenser problem. The cost to repair the condenser (part and labor) was a little less than a new refrigerator. Given that other things could go wrong, we replaced the refrigerator. The microwave we purchased in June 2008 had developed rust on the interior of the part that held the food in spite of being cleaned after each use. Once again, given the age of the device, we replaced it with hope that the new one will last as long as the former one (11 years). Such hope for replace-



ment life is not always realized. The water pump on the 1973 Ford engine lasted for more than 30 years (and many thousands of miles). The replacement pump lasted about 12 years. Its replacement lasted four years. I am not sure about the quality of “new” parts these days.

At present, I subscribe to 20 boating related magazines (including *MAIB*), some of them are professional (like *Marine News*), some are slick pages (like *Yachting*) and some are simple informational publications. Recently a neat publication, *Boat Design Quarterly*, ceased publication. The publication carried a selection of boat plans and no advertising which, with an annual subscription price of \$24, probably is the reason the four people involved finally gave up.

One of my favorite publications, *Sailors' Gazette: Southeast Sailing News Magazine*, was just that. If I wanted information on regattas, rendezvous, looking to purchase or sell a boat or just general knowledge of what was going on in the Southeast, this was the publication for me. We found some back copies of this newspaper format publication when we were cleaning out the attic to replace/repair the trusses, rafters and the like that were demolished when Hurricane Michael put a large pine tree on (and into) our bedroom and library area of the house. The rest are probably in a box in one of our storage lockers.

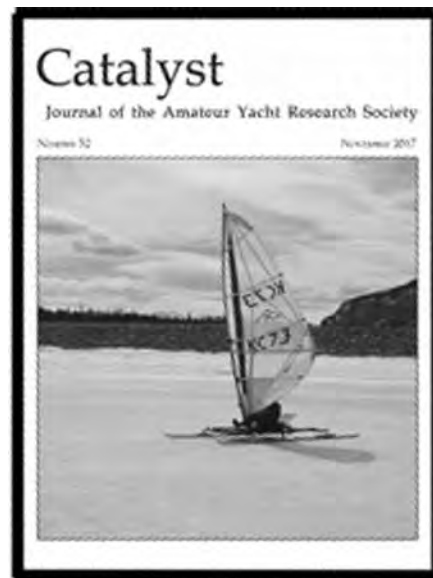
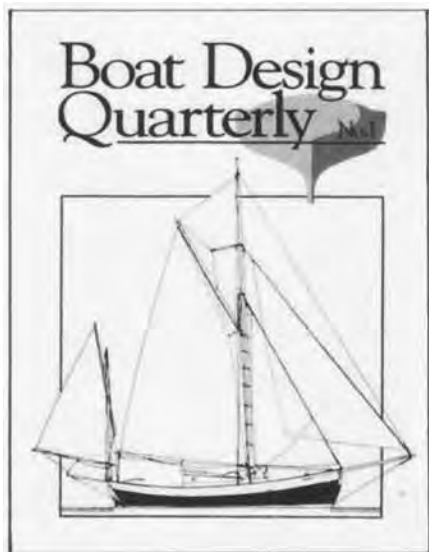
BoatBuilder is another neat publication that ceased a while back. Like most such magazines, it was full of information usually not found in the general boating magazines. For instance, the May/June 1989 issue had a useful article on “Scribing Irregularly Shaped Parts” by Lawrence Blotter.

The Amateur Yacht Research Society published a “bulletin” to which I subscribed a long time ago (1960s?). International mail,

international money orders and the like caused my subscription to drop and I was not able to reestablish a connection with these fine folks. Their publications on the results of research into hydrofoils on multi hulls was very interesting since they were attempting to “smooth” the ride with mechanical devices to account for the up and down motion of the forward hydro foil as it moved through the waves.

The mechanical device that one of the contributors devised to release the main sheet if a catamaran heeled too far was also of interest. Of great use to me when I was involved in sailboat racing was a table/graph developed to show the most efficient downwind angle with the chute up. In sailboat racing, speed through the water may not be the same as speed over the ground. The table/graph showed the speed generated at different angles of downwind sailing with the wind off the aft quarter. The information was useful both in MORC racing and when my wife and I raced our Tornado (without a chute) in local races. We matched the wind strength and direction with the course to the next mark and then took the closest course shown in/on the table/graph.

National recreational boat registration and accident statistics are distributed two years after the fact by the US Coast Guard (2018 *Recreational Boating Statistics*). The 2018 data, now available, shows Florida with the most registered boats and the most boating related deaths. Minnesota has the next highest number of registered boats and the lowest number of boating related deaths in the table shown. As in the past, most boating related deaths were attributed to not wearing a PFD (84%) and a growing number of accidents involved personal watercraft (19%). As usual, alcohol was a contributing factor to fatal accidents (19%) and is considered the number one contributing factor to boating accidents. In addition to alcohol, the five major factors in recreational accidents include operator inattention, no proper lookout, operator inexperience for the situation, machinery failure and excessive speed. I did a study of the full report of boating accidents many years ago and concluded, based on the data, the safest time on the water was on a weekday between 2-4am in a boat under 20' in bad weather. Obviously there are few people out in a small boat at night in inclement weather, so the numbers were very low.



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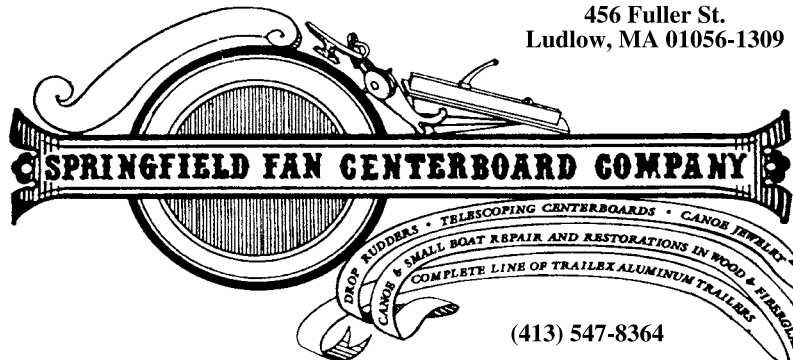
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